DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 105 774 FL 006 872

TITLE	A Contrastive Study of English and Mandarin Chinese.
INSTITUTION	Defense Language Inst., Monterey, Calif.
PUB DATE	Nov 74
NOTE	228p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Director, Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, CA 93940 (with specific permission)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC Not Available from EDRS. PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Adjectives; Adverbs; *Contrastive Linguistics; Descriptive Linguistics; Determiners (Languages); *English (Second Language); Form Classes (Languages); Grammar; Idioms; *Interference (Language Learning); Intonation; *Mandarin Chinese; Morphology (Languages); Nominals; Phrase Structure; Sentence Structure; *Structural Analysis; Suffixes; Suprasegmentals; Uncommonly Taught Languages; Verbs; Vocabulary

ABSTRACT

This contrastive analysis of English and Mandarin Chinese is designed to introduce ESL teachers to many of the fundamental differences between Chinese and English. This material is intended to assist the teacher in defining the problems that Chinese speakers are likely to have in learning English. The introduction includes information on the various dialects and subdialects of Chinese. Part one deals with phonology, including segmental and suprasegmental features. Part two deals with morphology, part three with sentence patterns, part four with verb phrases, and part five with noun phrases. Part six discusses vocabulary problems Chinese speakers encounter in learning English. (AM)

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NOVEMBER 1974

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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY
of
ENGLISH and MANDARIN CHINESE

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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY
OF
ENGLISH AND MANDARIN CHINESE

November 1974

DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study was prepared by the Contrastive Analysis Project, Department of Linguistics, University of Michigan, under Contract #F41609-69-C-0004 for the Defense Language Institute in 1969.

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PREFACE

It is a truism to state that we tend to appraise any human behavior, either consciouly or unconsciously, in terms of our own field of reference. This tendency is particularly true of language behavior; we always approach a second language in terms of our first language. Our ability to learn a second language then is constrained, to a greater or lesser extent, by our grounding in our own native language.

Perhaps an analogy to architecture will exemplify this interference more clearly. The acquisition of a first language in childhood is the foundation upon which our ability to speak our native language is built. Say that English is like a convention hall, for example, and Chinese like a skyscraper. These two buildings differ not only in their superstructure, but in their foundations as well. Learning a second language then is very much like trying to construct a new building with the wrong kind of foundation. Thus a Chinese student learning English as a second language is like someone trying to build a convention hall on the foundation of a skyscraper, and, conversely, an American trying to learn Chinese as a second language is like someone trying to build a skyscraper on the foundation of a convention hall. In both cases, the greatest source of difficulty is not that the superstructures differ, but that the foundations do.

It is the purpose of this manual, then, to introduce the English teacher to many of the ways in which Chinese and English differ fundamentally. It is hoped that the material presented here will assist the teacher in defining the problems that Chinese speakers are likely to have in learning English as a second language. Furthermore, by contrasting the difference in the patterns and structures of the two languages, it is hoped that the teacher will be able to present his material more lucidly and effectively to the Chinese student.

This manual abounds in remarks such as, "The Chinese language does not have..., Chinese students have great difficulty..., and, the Chinese speaker is liable to make errors like..." At no time are these remarks intended to be construed as critical of or condescending to the Chinese people or language. Anyone with linguistic training will know how difficult it is to compare the degree of "difficulty", "sophistication", or "logic" between any two languages. It is not because of these qualities, therefore, that English and Chinese differ, but because these languages are historically unrelated and geographically distant. A manual devoted to the teaching of Chinese to native English speakers, then, would contain many remarks on the mistakes and difficulties that English speakers would have. It is very important, therefore, that the teacher does not approach the problems which a Chinese student has in learning English in a critical or condescending manner, but rather with patience and understanding.

The reader should be aware that the Chinese language exists in many varieties. Recent scholarship divides contemporary spoken Chinese into eight major dialects, or more accurately, dialect groups, each of which can be further divided into subdialects, and even sub-subdialects. The basic grammatical structure of all these varieties of Chinese is virtually the same, and even in detail there is a very high degree of similarity among them. There is more divergence in vocabulary, especially that of non-literary, non-technical everyday speech. In phonology, also, basic structural characteristics are shared. The pattern of monosyllabic morphemes, each with a distinctive tone, limited distribution of phoneme types in the syllable, especially syllable-final consonants, and very little or no clustering of consonants, is maintained throughout all the dialects of Chinese. In phonological detail, however, there are marked differences among the major dialects. These differences are in fact so great that, together with differences in vocabulary, they produce mutual unintelligibility among the major dialect groupings.

By far the largest single dialect group, both in terms of number of speakers and geographical area in which it is spoken, is Northern Chinese, or Mandarin, which is spoken with relatively minor variations over all of China north of the Yangtze River and in the southwestern part of the country. Northern Chinese is the native tongue of an estimated 70 per cent of the population of China, and it is a variety of Northern Chinese--that of the capital city Peking--which forms the basis for the national standard language.

The non-Mandarin dialects of Chinese are spoken in the southeastern provinces, especially along the seacoast. The largest of these, in terms of numbers of speakers, is the Wu group, to which the speech of the great city of Shanghai belongs. Second is the Cantonese group, which includes the standard Cantonese of Canton City and the British colony of Hong Kong. Most of the shopkeepers in America's Chinatowns speak one or another subdialect of Cantonese. Wu is spoken by about 8.4 per cent of the population of China, and Cantonese by approximately five per cent. These seem like rather small figures, but in a population of 760 million (1966 estimate), it means that there are around 62 million speakers of Wu, which is more than the population of the United Kingdom, Italy, or France; and Cantonese, with around 38 million, has more speakers than the population of Spain. Another important dialect is Southern Min, which is spoken in the southern part of Fukien province and by approximately eighty per cent of Taiwan's population of thirteen million.

While 29 per cent of the population have as their mother tongue a non-Mandarin dialect (about one per cent speak non-Chinese languages), many of these--especially the younger generation--speak Mandarin as a second language. Since the advent of the government of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mandarin has been vigorously promoted throughout mainland China as the official common medium of communication and as the language

of instruction in the school systems. And on Taiwan it has been promoted by the government of the Republic of China with such success that now virtually all the youth of the island speak Mandarin. In these efforts, the standard language taught in the school systems both on the mainland of China and in Taiwan is defined as being based on the dialect of Peking. It is this Standard Mandarin that we have taken as the object of our comparison with English in this handbook. It must be realized, however, that this standard is to some extent only an ideal. There is considerable variation in the degree to which this ideal is approached in practice. When a Chinese whose native tongue is a non-Mandarin dialect learns the standard language he will experience interference from his native dialect, with the result that he will speak Mandarin with the "accent" of his own dialect--Cantonese, Taiwanese, or whatever it may be. And persons who speak natively a variety of Mandarin other than Pekingese generally do not feel the need to adjust their speech to the precise standard.

In this handbook we could not possibly describe the many varieties of Chinese, or even the varieties of Mandarin, which might be spoken by students of English teachers who will use this book. We have therefore couched our description in terms of comparison of English with Standard Mandarin, the "ideal" form of the language which is taught in China and in Taiwan, as well as to foreign students of Chinese in other parts of the world. It is likely that only a small minority of Chinese students of English will speak precisely the form of Chinese described. The speech of most will vary from this norm, and for many the variation may be quite pronounced.

The situation is perhaps not so bad as it would seem, however. As has been mentioned above, the amount of variation among Chinese dialects is least in the area of grammatical structure, greater in vocabulary, and greatest in the details of phonology. This means that the kinds of problems Chinese students have in learning English grammar, insofar as these problems are the result of interference from Chinese. are likely to be very much the same regardless of the students' dialect backgrounds.(There will,of course, be great variation depending upon each student's previous study of English.) Differences in vocabulary among dialects are for the most part not of a sort that will result in any significant differences in the kinds of difficulties students will have with English vocabulary. It is in phonology that Chinese dialects vary most widely, and it is there that individual dialect backgrounds will show most clearly in difficulties various Chinese students have with English pronunciation. Even in phonology, however, since the dialectal differences are primarily differences of detail rather than differences in basic phonological pattern, it is only in the more minor problems of pronunciation that a student's specific dialect background will significantly affect his learning of English. For the major problems, the basic structural differences between Chinese (of any variety) and English will far outweigh the differences in detail from one Chinese dialect to another.

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CHAPTER 1: PHONOLOGY: THE SOUNDS OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE

1.1. Segmental Phonemes

1.1.0. Introduction

The phonemes of a language are the individual sounds which make up its words. The symbol for a phoneme is written between slant lines. For example, /b/, /s/ and /ɑ/ are phonemes of English. A phoneme is usually written with one symbol; however, it may be written with two symbols if this makes it easier for us to remember how it is pronounced. For instance, the first sound in church can be written /tʃ/ to remind us that it begins like the stop /t/ and ends like the fricative /ʃ/.

The symbols which we use to write phonemes are chosen from the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with certain minor revisions. A detailed description of an actual language sound must include more features than those that are assumed for the basic phonemic symbol, and any phoneme in a given language may have a number of phonetic variants. A phonetic transcription, using additional symbols or diacritical marks to indicate these additional features, is written between square brackets. For example, the English phoneme /t/ (voiceless stop made with the tip of the tongue) has the following variants in different phonological environments: aspirated [t']* in word-initial position; unaspirated [t] following /s/, as in stop; flapped [t̬] as in butter or later; and unreleased [t˺] as in outcome.

A phoneme is defined for a particular language by its phonetic variants and their distribution in that language. This means that the "same" phoneme is always pronounced somewhat differently in two different languages. As indicated above, the "phoneme /t/" in English is sometimes aspirated and sometimes not. Chinese has a "phoneme /t/" which is never aspirated and contrasts with a "phoneme /t'/" which is always aspirated. English has both sounds but the difference between them is not phonemic. In Chinese they are distinct phonemes. In comparing two languages, one must deal with the similarities and differences on both the phonemic and the phonetic levels.

1.1.1. Chinese Consonants.

Chinese consonant phonemes are charted in Figure 1 on page two. Circled phonemes are not found in English. Some of these are similar enough to English phonemes so as to sound the same to the Chinese speaker and thus be substituted for the English phonemes, resulting in a 'foreign accent'. Those phonemes that are not circled are virtually the same for Chinese and English, at least in their dominant allophones, and are therefore sounds that the Chinese speaker has ready at hand for use in English.

Notice that all Chinese stops, affricates, and fricatives (except /r/) are voiceless. /r/ has a special status. It is normally pronounced with local friction only in very deliberate style of speech. It is always voiced, but in most other ways it

*In IPA either h or a reversed apostrophe ʻ can be used to indicate aspiration. We will use the plain typed apostrophe '.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Both Lips (bilabial)	Lower Lip and Upper Teeth (labiodental)	Tongue Tip and Teeth or Gum (apical)	Front of Tongue & Hard Palate (palatal)	Tongue Tip and Hard Palate (retroflex)	Back of Tonue & Soft Palate (velar)
Stops (all voiceless)	aspirated	p'		t'			k'
	unaspirated	(p)		(t)			(k)
Affricates (all voiceless)	aspirated			(ts')	(tś')	(tʃ')	
	unaspirated			(ts)	(tś)	(tʃ)	
Fricatives (all voiceless)			f	s	(ś)	(ʃ)	(x)
Nasals		m		n			ŋ
Lateral				l			
Continuants		(w)			(y)	(r)	

Figure 1. Consonant Phonemes of Mandarin Chinese. Circled phonemes are not shared with English.*

functions as a member of a set with /tʃ/, /tʃ'/, and /ʃ/. We therefore refer to it as a fricative in some of our discussion below. There are two sets of stops, but these two sets are distinguished only by the feature of aspiration. This is in contrast to the two sets of stops in English, which are distinguished primarily by voicing. The Chinese aspirated stops /p', t', k'/ are virtually the same as the aspirated variant of the voiceless set of stops in English, i.e., [p', t', k'] (cf. above, section 1.1.0.). Therefore these Chinese phonemes are not circled in our chart, even though the same symbols (with the diacritic for aspiration) will not be found in the English consonant chart. The Chinese unaspirated stops /p, t, k/ are very similar phonetically to the unaspirated variants of the corresponding English voiceless stops, but these are circled on the chart because phonetic [p, t, k] occur in English only in very restricted environments (cf. section 1.1.0.). All six affricates /ts', tś', tʃ', ts, tś, tʃ/ are circled because they are all different from any English phonemes. Chinese /ś/ and /ʃ/ both sound somewhat similar to English /ʃ/ but are still sufficiently different that their substitution for the English sound results in a noticeable accent. The same is true of /tś'/ and /tʃ'/ in their similarity to English /tʃ/.

Chinese /x/ and /r/ are somewhat similar to English /h/ and /r/ respectively, but the Chinese sounds may have local friction

* Note that we are using ś and ʃ (both as single symbols and in the affricate digraphs) in place of IPA ɕ and ʂ respectively, and the proper IPA symbol for our r is ɻ

while the English phonemes are frictionless. English /r/ carries lip-rounding, whereas Chinese /r/ is rounded only when immediately preceding a rounded vowel or semivowel.

w and y on the chart represent the vowel glides [u̯] and [i̯] (cf. sec. 1.1.5.) but are included here in parentheses for convenience in comparison with the semivowels /w/ and /y/ which in English are analysed as consonants (cf. sec. 1.1.2.). (Also see Table 4, notes 2 and 3 for use of w and y in pīnyīn spelling for Chinese.)

1.1.2. English Consonants.

Manner of Articulation \ Place of Articulation		Both Lips (bilabial)	Lower Lip and Upper Teeth (labiodental)	Tip of Tongue and Teeth (interdental)	Tip of Tongue and Tooth Ridge (apicoalveolar)	Front of Tongue and Hard Palate (laminopalatal)	Back of Tongue and Soft Palate (dorsovelar)	Throat (glottal)
Stops	voiceless	p			t		k	
	voiced	(b)			(d)		(g)	
Affricates	voiceless					(tʃ)		
	voiced					(dʒ)		
Fricatives	voiceless		f	(θ)	s	(ʃ)		(h)
	voiced		(v)	(ð)	(z)	(ʒ)		
Nasals		m			n			
Lateral					l			
Semivowels		w			(r)	y		

Figure 2. Consonant phonemes of English. Circled phonemes are not shared with Chinese.*

A careful inspection of the patterning of circles in Figure 2 will reveal several categories of English consonants that are likely to be difficult for Chinese speakers. It was pointed out in the preceding section (1.1.1.) that all Chinese stops, affricates and fricatives are voiceless. There are no voiced phonemes of these types in Chinese. Note that of the thirteen phonemes circled in Figure 2, eight are voiced stops, affricates or fricatives: /b, d, g; dʒ; v, ð, z, ʒ/.

* Note that we use /y/ in our phonemic notation for IPA [j].

As was explained in section 1.1.1., English /p, t, k/ correspond more closely to Chinese /p', t', k'/ than to Chinese /p, t, k/. Therefore, the symbols p, t and k are circled on the Chinese chart but not on the English chart.

Chinese has two sets of sounds that are similar to English /tʃ / and /ʃ/ (cf. section 1.1.1.), but none that are quite the same. There is nothing in Chinese that is even similar to /θ/ or /ð/ with their 'interdental' or tip-of-tongue-flat-against-edge-of-teeth articulation.

Chinese /x/ has a phonetic variant [h] which matches English /h/, but the dominant form of the Chinese phoneme is [x], with velar friction, which is completely lacking in the English phoneme.

American English /r/ is rounded and without friction, while Chinese /r/ is unrounded in most of its distribution and usually carries local friction (cf. section 1.1.1.).

Although we have not circled /y/ on this chart, it does cause a great deal of difficulty for Chinese speakers in one particular environment, namely preceding a high front vowel ([i] or [I]). For example, Chinese speakers of English may have a great deal of difficulty distinguishing east /ist/ and yeast /yist/. (See section 1.1.3.6. below for further discussion of this problem.)

The following five sections are devoted to further discussion of special problems Chinese speakers have in learning English consonants.

1.1.3. Chinese and English Consonants Compared: Special Difficulties for the Chinese Student.

1.1.3.1. Voicing.

Chinese has no voiced stops, affricates, or fricatives. As can be seen from the charts in 1.1.1. and 1.1.2., both Chinese and English have two sets of stops and affricates. In English, one set is voiced and one set is voiceless. In Chinese, however, both sets are voiceless. The difference between the two Chinese sets is that one set is aspirated and one set is unaspirated. Since aspiration does occur as a supplemental feature in English, the Chinese speaker can associate his aspirated stops and affricates with English voiceless aspirated stops and affricates, and his unaspirated stops and affricates with English voiced unaspirated ones. This will allow him to distinguish between the two sets of stops and affricates but will make the pronunciation of the voiced set sound strange to native speakers. (See the following section for a discussion of problems with the aspirated sounds.)

The Chinese speaker will pronounce:

English	bill	as	[pIl]	instead of	[bIl]
	do	as	[tu]	instead of	[du]
	get	as	[kɛt]	instead of	[gɛt]

For /d/, in addition to voicing, there is also the differ-

ence in place of articulation. As will be seen from the charts, English /d/ is pronounced with the tip of the tongue against the gum ridge, while the nearest counterpart in Chinese, /t/, is articulated a bit further forward, with the tip of the tongue touching the back of the upper teeth as well as the most forward part of the gum ridge. This difference in articulatory position is very small, however, and relatively unimportant.

The Chinese speaker must first learn how to make voiced stops. After that, drills should be devised which contrast voiced and voiceless stops in otherwise identical words:

bill : pill
do : to
got : cot

The English voiced affricate /dʒ/ presents a similar problem. The Chinese student must learn to voice it; and in addition he must learn the correct articulatory position.

Chinese also lacks voiced fricatives. The Chinese speaker may pronounce English /v/, /z/, and /ʒ/ as their voiceless counterparts /f/, /s/ and /ʃ/, with some additional difficulty arising from the 'bunched tongue' articulation of /ʒ/ and /ʃ/. /ð/ is especially difficult because it requires voicing in addition to the completely strange articulatory position which it shares with /θ/.

In fricatives, of course, there is nothing corresponding to the aspirated-unaspirated distinction which reinforces the voiceless-voiced distinction of the stops and affricates. Students may pronounce pairs of words like the following exactly the same:

sip/zip	both pronounced	[sIp]
fishes/vicious		[fIʃəs]

It is therefore especially important that students be taught to voice the appropriate fricatives.

Students can often be helped to recognize voiced-voiceless distinctions by holding their hands over their ears or touching their throats as the pronounce alternately voiced and voiceless sounds. Once a student has learned how to voice a consonant, then the remaining task is to drill the proper pronunciation until it becomes habitual.

1.1.3.2. Aspiration.

Both Chinese and English have aspirated stops and affricates. However, Chinese aspirated sounds are nearly always strongly aspirated. English aspirated sounds are strongly aspirated only in word-initial position. Medially and finally they are only weakly aspirated; except that medial /t/ and /k/ are strongly aspirated before a stressed syllable (e.g., attempt). If the final sound is unreleased, it will of course not be aspirated at all. Voiceless stops are also unaspirated following /s/, as in stop, spell, skill, and are unreleased be-

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fore other consonants, as in ripped [rip˺t], utmost [ət˺most]. The Chinese speaker will tend to pronounce the voiceless stops as strongly aspirated in all of these positions unless the difference is pointed out and drilled.

1.1.3.3. Positional Variants.

In general, English consonants are pronounced more strongly initially and less strongly medially and finally. Final consonants tend to be unreleased, especially at the end of a phrase. When Chinese speakers learn to make final consonants (cf. section 1.1.3.4.) they pronounce them distinctly and release them fully. It is very difficult for a Chinese speaker to hear weakly articulated stops, especially unreleased voiced stops.

1.1.3.4. Final Consonants.

Mandarin Chinese has no consonants except /n/ and /ŋ/ at the ends of syllables. Final consonants are thus difficult for the Chinese speaker to produce. Two types of mistakes are common:

1) The Chinese speaker may leave off the final consonant. For example, lab may be pronounced [læ].

2) He may add a vowel after the final consonant, making the word one syllable longer. If corrected on lab, he may change his [læ] to [læbə] or [lɑbu].

1.1.3.5. Consonant Clusters.

Consonant clusters are subject to the same two types of mistakes as are final consonants discussed in the preceding section. Since Chinese has no consonant clusters within a single syllable, and since even between syllables the only consonant sequences that can occur are of a final nasal, /n/ or /ŋ/, followed by an initial consonant, the Chinese speaker is accustomed to following each single consonant with a vowel in the same syllable. He will tend to insert a neutral vowel between any sequence of consonants he pronounces in English. In addition, he will tend to fail to pronounce some of the consonants in a cluster. Insertion of extra vowels is a result of the problem of transitions between consonants. English can be described as having three possible kinds of transitions between consonants within a word. The first is close transition. This is the transition between adjacent consonants, as in:

sport	[spɔrt]
back part	[bækpɑrt]

In close transition there is a consonantal closure maintained at all points during the sequence. Either one closure is used for both or the second closure is formed before the first one is released.

In open transition the first consonant is momentarily released before the second consonant is formed. A short vowel sound is thus heard between the consonants. Three kinds of open transition occur, a high front [^{I}], a high back [^{U}] and a mid [^{ə}]. (They are written above the line to indicate their short-

ness.) These open transitions are the unstressed versions of regular vowels which merge into more neutral varieties:

support [s^{U}port] or [s^{ə}port]

believe [b^{I}liv] or [b^{ə}liv]

A vowel transition is the transition between two consonants separated by a stressed vowel.

The Chinese speaker will usually substitute vowel transition for open transition (that is, he will pronounce unstressed vowels too distinctly). Similarly, he will substitute open transition for close transition (that is, insert short vowels between adjacent consonants). Both of these kinds of errors can be attacked through drills which contrast all three types of transition. An example might be:

supper	[sə́pr]	beaver	[bívr]
support	[s^{ə}pɔ́rt]	believe	[b^{I}lív]
sport	[sport]	bleed	[blid]

Use of such triplets, in which the goal of close transition is approached through the intermediate stage of open transition should help the student to acquire the correct pronunciation of consonant clusters.

Consonants are most often dropped when they occur in final clusters. These clusters should be easier to learn if they are first introduced in a phrase in which the cluster is immediately followed by a vowel. This will allow the last consonant in the cluster to be pronounced as if it were the first consonant of the following word. For instance, the cluster /zd/ in used could first be presented in the phrase he used it, which would be pronounced [hi yuz dIt]. Once this has been mastered, the student can attempt phrases where a consonant follows, as in used book [yuzd bUk]. And from that stage, he can go on to pronounce the word used alone or at the end of an utterance.

1.1.3.6. A Checklist of Consonant Problems.

Here we present a checklist of English consonant phonemes. For each phoneme or set of phonemes listed we include brief comments or a reference to sections where relevant problems are discussed, or both.

In referring to subsections of 1.1.3. (i.e., those immediately above), we have used section headings rather than numbers, as the headings should be more immediately meaningful to the reader. These headings are:

Voicing	1.1.3.1.
Aspiration	1.1.3.2.
Positional Variants	1.1.3.3.
Final Consonants	1.1.3.4.
Consonant Clusters	1.1.3.5.

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Table 1

A Checklist of Consonant Problems

/b/ and /p/
See Aspiration, Voicing, and Positional Variants.

/d/ and /t/
See Aspiration, Voicing, and Positional Variants.

English /t/ can become a flap [ɾ] between vowels or before a syllabic consonant. Some Chinese speakers whose native dialect is not Mandarin may pronounce both /d/ and /l/ and perhaps /r/ as a flapped r [ɾ], similar to this flapped t

/g/ and /k/
See Aspiration, Voicing, and Positional Variants.

/dʒ/ and /tʃ/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/dʒ/ is very difficult for Chinese speakers, since it involves a sequence of two voiced sounds and since /ʒ/ is difficult by itself. It may be pronounced as unvoiced [ts].

/v/, /f/, and /w/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/v/ is diffiuclt because of its voicing. /f/ will often be substituted for /v/ because the two sounds have the same articulatory position, lower lip against the upper teeth. /w/ is also a common substitution because it is the closest voiced counterpart to /v/ among the sounds that the student has from Chinese. Speakers whose native dialect is Taiwanese may pronounce /f/ with both lips as [ɸ], and this may sound to the American ear like /h/ or /w/. Similarly, they may pronounce /v/ as [β], which we may hear as /b/.

/s/ and /z/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/s/ before /i/ may be pronounced like Chinese /ś/, which may sound like English /ʃ/. Thus sea might sound like she.

/z/ may be pronounced like Chinese voiceless [ts].

/ʃ/ and /ʒ/
See Voicing and Positional Variants.

/ʒ/ is a rather difficult sound for Chinese speakers. It may be pronounced as [ʃ] or [ts]. It may be helpful to suggest that /ʒ/ is pronounced something like Chinese initial /r/.

/θ/ and /ð/

See Voicing and Positional Variants.

These sounds are very difficult for Chinese speakers, since there are no sounds in Chinese using this position of the tongue and teeth.

/θ/ may be pronounced as /s/, /ʃ/, /t/, or /ts/. /ð/ may receive those same pronunciations or their voiced counterparts /z/, /ʒ/, /d/, or /dz/. Sometimes a student who has learned that the 'careful' articulation for /θ/ and /ð/ is interdental will overarticulate, making his tongue protrude too far forward between his teeth.

/m/, /n/, and /ŋ/

Nasals usually cause no problems for speakers of Standard Mandarin except when used as syllabic consonants. (See section 1.2.3. for a discussion of syllablic consonants.)

Some Chinese dialects do not distinguish between /n/ and /ŋ/ in final position, and speakers of those dialects may therefor experience some diffculty with English word-final /-n/ and /-ŋ/.

/l/ and /r/

/l/ has two varieties in English, so-called 'light l' [l] in word-initial position, and back or 'dark l' [ɫ] in post-vocalic position or as a syllabic consonant. Many Chinese speakers will substitute a vowel (commonly a high back unrounded [ɯ]) for the syllabic /l/, as:

[batɯ] instead of [batɫ], for bottle

Some will make the same substitution also for the post-vocalic /l/, as:

[fIɯ] instead of [fIɫ], for fill;

others will use the light l [l] for both initial and post-vocalic position. Some Chinese may pronounce initial /l/, along with /d/ and /r/ as a flap [ɾ]. This may sound like English /d/ or the British flap r in 'veddy good'.

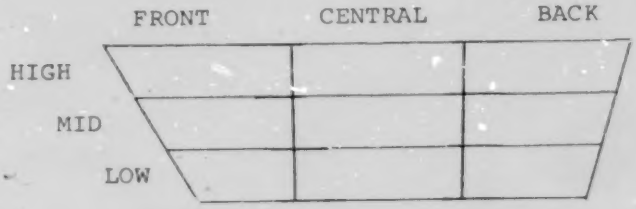
/y/

In Chinese there is no contrast between the high front vowel [i] and a high front semivowel [j]. Instead, the Chinese vowel phoneme /i/ may acquire a slight non-distinctive glide in front of it when it is at the beginning of a syllable (see

section 1.1.5. for details). Because of this the Chinese speaker will tend to pronounce English east /ist/ and yeast alike, omitting the initial /y/ from yeast.

1.1.4. English Vowels.

Vowel sounds are usually diagrammed on a chart which shows the position of the tongue in the mouth during their formation. This chart is called a vowel quadrilateral. The positions are labelled as follows:



Other features may be represented schematically on this chart by the addition of extra rows and columns. The vowel chart below shows the English vowel phonemes according to the feature dimensions of high-low, front-back, and tense-lax. Tense vowels are made with the tongue in a position further from the neutral, relaxed position than lax vowels. Lax vowels are lower and more centralized than their tense counterparts.

	FRONT (UNROUNDED)	CENTRAL (UNROUNDED)	BACK (ROUNDED)	
HIGH	i		u	TENSE
	I		U	LAX
MID	e	ə	o	TENSE
	ɛ		ɔ	LAX
LOW	æ	ɑ		(LAX)

Figure 3. English Vowel Phonemes.

The eleven vowels of English are charted in Figure 3. There are also three diphthongs, [ɑI], [ɑU] and [ɔI], which we shall write phonemically as /ɑy/, /ɑw/ and /ɔy/. In addition to these three "true diphthongs," the high and mid tense vowels have alternate

pronunciations as diphthongs, in which the main vowel element is followed by a glide to a high front or high back position, as follows (also cf. section 1.2.4.1.):

/i/ = [i] or [ij] /u/ = [u] or [uw]
/e/ = [e] or [ej] /o/ = [o] or [ow]

1.1.5. Chinese Vowels.

1.1.5.0. For Chinese, the additional features needed are rounded-unrounded and retroflex-plain. A schematic chart including all four features dimensions could be drawn as follows:

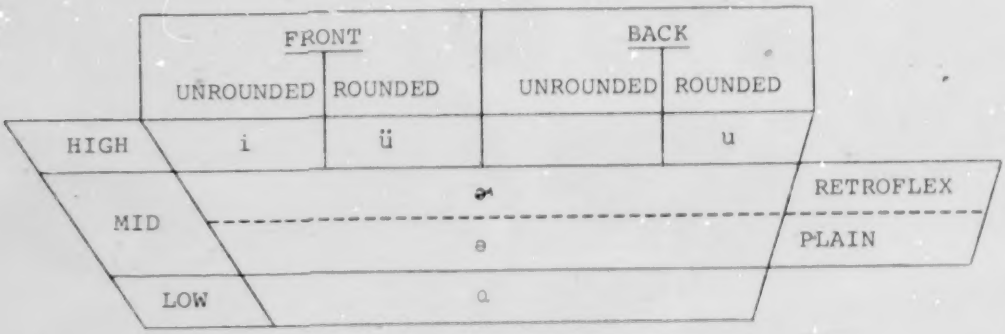


Figure 4. Chinese Vowel Phonemes, Arranged By Features.*

/ü/ is pronounced with the same tongue position as /i/ but with the lips rounded. /ɚ/ is pronounced with the same basic tongue position as /ə/ but with the tongue tip raised behind the gum ridge.

The above chart is schematic, it emphasizes features over tongue position. A chart emphasizing the dominant tongue position for each phoneme could be drawn as follows:

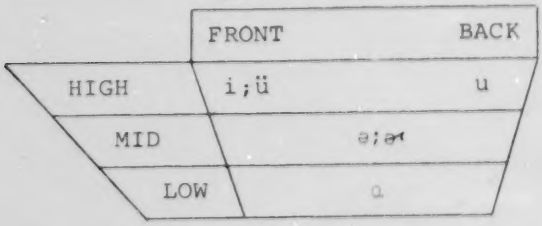


Figure 5. Chinese Vowel Phonemes Arranged by Articulatory Position of Dominant Variant.*

* We use ü in place of IPA [y] in order to avoid confusion with /y/ as used in our English phonemicization.

We can see from these charts that the Chinese vowel quadrilateral has a basically triangular shape. There is no phonemic contrast between front and back vowels on either the mid or the low levels.

The preceding charts show the major phonetic variant of each Chinese vowel phoneme; each phoneme occurs in other phonetic variants in special environments.

1.1.5.1. A high vowel may acquire a non-distinctive on-glide or a non-distinctive initial glottal stop when it is not preceded by an initial consonant:

/i/ = [i̯i] or [ʔi]

/ü/ = [ü̯ü] or [ʔü]

/u/ = [u̯u] or [ʔu]

(̯ under a vowel indicates that it is acting as a non-syllabic glide.)

It may itself become a glide when it is followed by another vowel in the same syllable:

/iV/ = [i̯V]

/üV/ = [ü̯V]

/uV/ = [u̯V]

(V stands for any vowel.)

/i/ and /u/ may also become glides when preceded by another vowel in the same syllable:

/Vi/ = [Vi̯]

/Vu/ = [Vu̯]

/i/ and /u/ are lowered before /ŋ/:

[lIŋ] vs. [li] or [lin]

[tUŋ] vs. [tu]

1.1.5.2. The plain mid vowel /ə/ has the variations shown on the following page.

Before a high front vowel in the same syllable, /ə/ appears as [e]. Before a high back vowel in the same syllable it appears as [o]. After a high front vowel in the same syllable, it becomes [ɛ].

/əi/ is pronounced [e$\overset{i}{\wedge}$]

/əu/ is pronounced [o$\overset{u}{\wedge}$]

/iə/ is pronounced [$\overset{i}{\wedge}$ɛ]

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK	
			UNROUNDED	ROUNDED
HIGH				
MID	e ɛ	ə	ɤ	o ɔ
LOW				

Figure 6. Phonetic Variants of Mid Vowel /ə/.

The sequence of high back rounded /u/ and mid unrounded /ə/ adds a transitional mid rounded vowel. Thus /uə/ becomes [$\overset{u}{\wedge}$ɔ$\overset{ə}{\wedge}$]. When /ə/ is the final element in a syllable and is not preceded by another vowel, it is pronounced [ɤ$\overset{ə}{\wedge}$], that is it begins further back and ends more central. When it precedes a nasal, it has its base form [ə], e.g., [tʃən] or [ləŋ].

1.1.5.3. When the retroflex mid vowel /ɚ/ stands alone to form a syllable it varies with the tone of the syllable, appearing as [ɚ] in tones 1 and 2 and [ɑ˞] in tones 3 and 4.

See section 1.2.3. below for further discussion of syllabic retroflexion, which affects virtually all the vowels of the system.

1.1.5.4. The low vowel /ɑ/ has the following variants:

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH			
MID	ɛ		
LOW		a ɑ	

Figure 7. Phonetic Variants of Low Vowel /ɑ/.

The basic form of /ɑ/ is a low central vowel. It has this form [ɑ] in syllable final position ([t'ɑ], [$\overset{i}{\wedge}$ɑ]) and when followed by the

high back vowel /u/ or the back nasal /ŋ/. When it is followed by /i/ or /n/ it is fronted to [a]. And between /i/ and /n/ (/iɑn/) it is further fronted and raised to [ɛ] ([^{i}ɛn]).

1.1.5.5. Chinese has two sets of vowel sounds which are supplementary to the phonemic system. One set is used only in interjections. It has a front member which appears randomly as [e] or [ɛ] and a back member which appears randomly as [o] or [ɔ].

The other set occurs parasitically following those consonants which can form syllables alone, i.e., the apical and retroflex affricates and fricatives. (See section 1.2.2.2. below.) It also has two members, a plain member following an apical initial consonant and a retroflex member following a retroflex initial consonant. They are sometimes referred to as 'homorganic' vowels because their articulation is the same as the preceding consonant except that the tongue is retracted from the palate just enough to cause cessation of the local friction of the consonant. Both members can be considered high, central and unrounded. They will be represented by the symbols [ɨ] (plain) and [ɻ̩] (retroflex).

These extra vowels would fit into the vowel quadrilateral as follows:

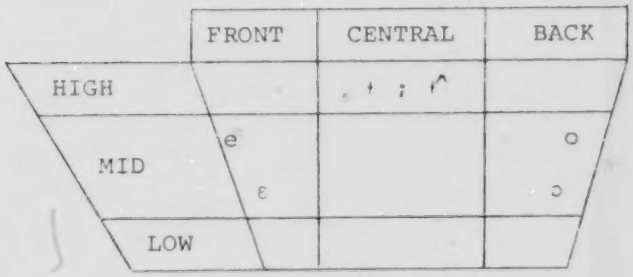


Figure 8. Vowels Supplementary to the Phonemic System.

1.1.6. English and Chinese Vowels Compared: Special Difficulties for the Chinese Student.

The chart on the next page shows the positions of the major variants of Chinese and English vowel phonemes superimposed on each other. The Chinese vowels form a triangular system with a pointed bottom; the English sounds form a quadrilateral system with a flat bottom.

Chinese vowels that do not occur as phonemes in English are circled. English vowels that do not occur as phonemes in Chinese lie outside the V which marks the bottom of the Chinese vowel triangle.

Figure 9 will help us to see the overall contrast between the phonemic vowel systems of the two languages and to make some general statements about the kinds of problems Chinese students can be expected to have with English vowels.

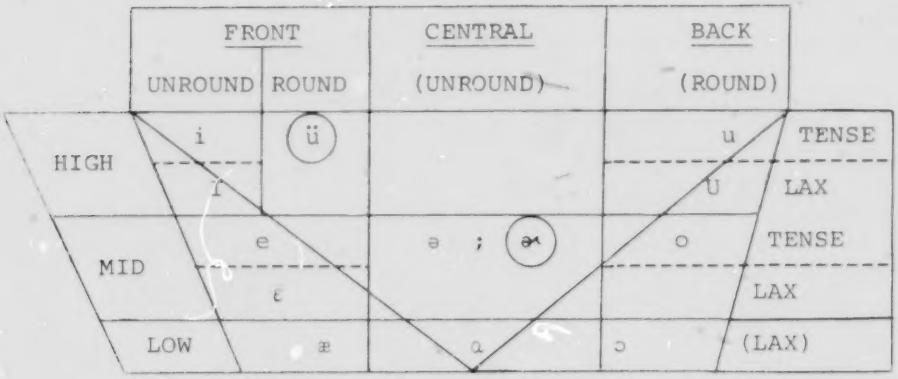


Figure 9. English and Chinese Vowel Systems.

1.1.6.1. Quadrilateral vs. Triangular Tongue Movement.

The Chinese vowel system distinguishes only three degrees of height and has no phonemic distinction between front and back on the mid and low levels. This means that the Chinese speaker must learn many new distinctions of vowel quality to master the English vowel system. English distinguishes five heights in front (/i/, /I/, /e/, /ɛ/, /æ/) and four in back (/u/, /U/, /o/, /ɔ/). These sets of vowels should be practised together as well as in minimal pairs and triplets. The front-back distinction should also be drilled by means of minimal pairs and triplets: /ɛ/ /ə/ /U/; /æ/ /ɑ/ /ɔ/; etc.

1.1.6.2. Tense-Lax Distinction.

Chinese has no lax vowels. The distinction between tense and lax vowels is therefore difficult for the Chinese speaker to make. English has three pairs of vowels distinguished by the feature of tenseness, /i/ vs. /I/, /e/ vs. /ɛ/, and /u/ vs. /U/. It is particularly difficult for the Chinese speaker to distinguish--both in hearing and producing--the front lax vowels from their tense counterparts and from one another. ɛ/æ is perhaps the single most difficult distinction.

1.1.6.3. Glides.

English /i/ and /u/ usually end with a glide that is higher and tenser at the end than at the beginning. /u/ also increases greatly in lip-rounding at the end. Though Chinese /i/ and /u/ may begin with a glide (cf. section 1.1.5.1.), once begun, the tongue (and for /u/, lip) position is maintained without change to the end of the vowel. Chinese diphthongs also end on glides that are lower, shorter, and less tense than the final glides of English diphthongs. In all these cases the Chinese speaker must learn to produce strong glides at the end of English diphthongs. (/i/ and /u/ may be written ii or iy and uw to remind the student that they consist of two parts with different phonetic properties.)

1.1.6.4. The following table is a checklist of English vowels

with references to the three preceding sections and brief comments on difficulties presented by each vowel. Sounds which are not likely to cause trouble are omitted from the list.

Table 2

Checklist of Vowel Problems

/ɑ/

Chinese has an /ɑ/ phoneme; however, its range extends as far forward as English /ɛ/, resulting in difficulty for the Chinese speaker in distinguishing English /ɛ,æ,ɑ/.

/ɑu/

See Glides above.

Chinese /ɑu/ is different from English /ɑu/ in two ways: Chinese /ɑ/ in this combination is pronounced farther back, and the /u/ off-glide is not as strong in Chinese as in the English diphthong. Therefore /ɑu/ as pronounced by the Chinese speaker may sound to the American ear like [ɔ] or [ɔ$^{U}_{\wedge}$].

/æ/

See Tense-Lax and Quadrilateral.

/æ/ is very difficult for Chinese speakers. It is very often confused with English /ɛ/ or /ɑ/.

/e/

See Quadrilateral, Tense-Lax.

The diphthong variety [ej] of this vowel has a counterpart in the Chinese diphthong /əi/ (pronounced [e$^{i}_{\wedge}$]). It may, however, also be confused with the other non-high front vowels /ɛ/ and /æ/.

/ɛ/

See Quadrilateral, Tense-Lax.

Non-high /ɛ/ is difficult for the Chinese speaker. Since /ɛ/ is within the range of the Chinese phoneme /ə/, it may be confused with English /ə/. It may also be confused with the other non-high front vowels /e/ and /æ/.

/ə/

Chinese /ə/ ranges over the whole mid level. Because of this, the Chinese speaker may confuse English /ə/ with English mid front /ɛ/. In the back vowel area, /ɔ/ may be pronounced as [ɤ], a mid back unrounded vowel that may sound very much like English slightly rounded /U/.

/i/

See Glides, Tense-Lax.

/I/

See Glides, Tense-Lax.

/o/

See Quadrilateral, Tense-Lax, Glides.

The diphthongal variety /ow/ has a counterpart in the Chinese diphthong /əu/; however, /o/ may also be confused with /ɔ/. The Chinese diphthong /ɑu/ may also sometimes be substituted for English /o/.

/ɔ/

See Quadrilateral, Tense-Lax.

/ɔ/ may be confused with the unrounded low vowel /ɑ/.

/U/

See Quadrilateral, Tense-Lax.

/U/ may be confused with its tense counterpart /u/. Because English /U/ is only slightly rounded, it may also be confused with the lax mid central vowel /ə/.

/u/

See Tense-Lax and Glides.

/u/ may be confused with the other non-low rounded vowels /U/ and /o/.

1.2. The Syllable.

1.2.1. Chinese Tones.

Every Chinese syllable has associated with it one of five pitch patterns, or tones. Tones 1, 2, 3 and 4 occur on stressed syllables; tone 5, or neutral tone, occurs on particles and on the unstressed syllables of compound words. The phonemic pitch patterns of the tones are:

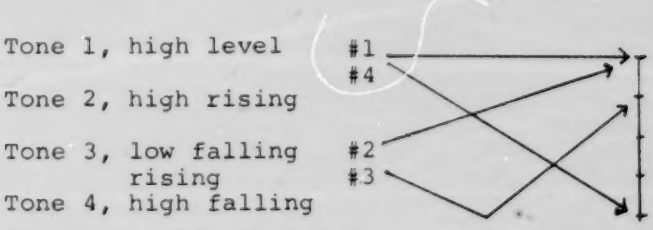


Figure 9: Chinese tones

Neutral tone syllables are always unstressed and normally very short. Their pitches are determined by the tones of the preceding and following syllables.

In transcribing Chinese words, syllables in tone 5 are customarily left unmarked for tone. Tones 1 through 4 may be indi-

cated by writing the number of the tone after the syllable on which it occurs, or by writing a tone mark over the main vowel of the syllable. The tone marks which will be used in the romanization introduced in section 1.4. are derived from the tone graphs above. They are as follows (with their usual names following):

#1	ā	high
#2	á	rising
#3	ǎ	low
#4	à	falling
#5	a	neutral

1.2.2. Chinese Syllable Shapes.

1.2.2.1. Every Chinese syllable must have a tone. A syllable may consist of a single consonant phoneme plus a tone phoneme. The consonant phoneme will be followed by a non-distinctive vowel. (See section 1.1.5.5. above.) Only certain consonants may occur in this type of syllable. They are the dental affricates and fricatives /ts'/, /ts/ and /s/, and the retroflex affricates and fricatives /tʃ'/, /tʃ/, /ʃ/ and /r/. (See section 1.1.1. for the position of these sounds on a chart of Chinese consonants.) The plain dental friction sounds are followed by a plain high central unrounded vowel [ɨ]. The retroflex friction sounds are followed by a retroflexed high central unrounded vowel [ɚ]. Some sample words are:

/ts^{4}/	[tsɨ^{4}]	'self'
/ts'^{2}/	[ts'ɨ^{2}]	'word, term'
/s^{3}/	[sɨ^{3}]	'die'
/tʃ^{1}/	[tʃɚ^{1}]	'know'
/tʃ'^{1}/	[tʃ'ɚ^{1}]	'eat'
/ʃ^{3}/	[ʃɚ^{3}]	'to cause'
/r^{4}/	[rɚ^{4}]	'sun'

1.2.2.2. Any Chinese vowel phoneme may form a syllable alone:

/i^{1}/	[$^{i}_{\wedge}$ī]	'one'
/u^{3}/	[$^{u}_{\wedge}$ǔ]	'five'
/ü^{3}/	[$^{ü}_{\wedge}$ǔ]	'rain'
/e^{4}/	[$^{e}_{\wedge}$è]	'hungry'

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/ɑ^{4}/ [ɑ̀] prefix to personal names

/ər^{2}/ [ɚ́] 'son'

See section 1.1.5. for explanations of the phonetic variants given here.

1.2.2.3. In a syllable with two vowels, either the first or the last is always a high vowel. In a syllable with three vowels, both the first and the last will be high vowels. The combinations of vowel phonemes which occur within these limits are as follows: (/ər/ does not combine with other vowels in the same syllable except in two-morpheme combinations, which are discussed in section 1.2.3. below.)

2 Vowels:

	-ɑ	-ə	-i	-u
ɑ-			ɑi	ɑu
ə-			əi	əu
i-	iɑ	iə		
u-	uɑ	uə		
ü-		üə		

3 Vowels:

	-ɑi	-əi	-ɑu	-əu
i-	iɑi*		iɑu	iəu
u-	uɑi	uəi		

*This combination occurs only in one or two rare words.

A high vowel in any of these combinations usually becomes a glide phonetically, turning the combination into a phonetic diphthong or tripthong. A mid vowel between two high vowels may be raised and shortened or entirely deleted, yielding phonetic [uɐ̯i], [uɪ̯i] or [ui] from phonemic /uəi/ and phonetic [iɐ̯u], [iʊ̯u] or [iu] from phonemic /iəu/.

1.2.2.4. Chinese has no consonant clusters. Any consonant except /ŋ/ may begin a syllable. The only consonants which may occur at the end of a syllable are the nasals /n/ and /ŋ/. If a syllable ends with a consonant, it may have no more than two vowels, and if it has two vowels the second one must not be a high vowel.

1.2.2.5. The range of permitted Chinese syllable shapes can be represented by the list of formulas given on the next page. C

stands for a permitted initial consonant, V stands for a main vowel, H stands for an obligatory high vowel and N stands for a permitted final nasal. The consonants in parentheses are optional:

	No Consonant		Consonant	
C			/ts$\mathring{a}^4$/	'word'
(C)V	/u^3/	'five'	/t'a^1/	'he'
(C)VN	/in^1/	'sound'	/maŋ^2/	'busy'
(C)HV	/iə^3/	'also'	/t'iə^3/	'iron'
(C)VH	/ai^4/	'love'	/kəu^4/	'enough'
(C)HVN	/ian^1/	'tobacco'	/nian^2/	'year'
(C)HVH	/uəi^2/	'dangerous'	/biau^3/	'watch'

1.2.2.6. This chart of permitted syllable types is of course generalized. There are many more limited restrictions on which consonants occur with which specific vowels and vowel sequences. The most important of these restrictions concerns the consonants which may or may not precede the high front vowels /i/ and /u/. These vowels may never be preceded by the apical or retroflex affricates and fricatives /ts', ts, s; tʃ', tʃ, ʃ, r/ or by the velars /k', k, x/.

1.2.3. Chinese Retroflex Syllables.

1.2.3.1. The Chinese morpheme /ə̀^{2}/ can act as a stem meaning son (in /ə̀^{2}ts/ son, /ə̀^{2}nü^3/ sons and daughters) or can serve as a suffix to another stem. When it acts as a suffix, it merges with the stem to which it is suffixed, forming a single-syllable complex word. In this merging, the stem word may drop some of its sounds and others may be modified. The vowel or diphthong of the stem is retroflexed to match the retroflexion of the suffix. The new syllable keeps the tone of the stem, the tone of the suffix morpheme being lost in the merger.

1.2.3.2. When /ə̀/ is added to the diphthongs /ai/ and /əi/ they drop their final vowel. The remaining vowel is then retroflexed. Similarly, when /ə̀/ is added to a syllable ending in /n/, the /n/ is dropped and the preceding vowel is retroflexed. When /ə̀/ is added to a syllable ending in /ŋ/, the /ŋ/ is dropped and the preceding vowel is both nasalized and retroflexed.

1.2.3.3. /ə̀/ is added directly to the single vowels /ü/, /i/, /a/, /ə/ and /u/ and to the diphthongs /əu/ and /au/. These vowels and diphthongs are retroflexed, except for the high front vowels /i/ and /ü/, which cannot physically be retroflexed. The /ə̀/ suffix may optionally be dropped after any vowel which has acquired retroflexion:

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[fɑ˞] is derived from [fɑ] + [ɚ]
[kɚ] from [kə] + [ɚ]
[tu˞] from [tu] + [ɚ]
[t'əu˞] from [t'əu] + [ɚ]
[mɑ˞u˞] from [mɑu] + [ɚ]

For syllables with high front vowels, /ɚ/ is added and the vowel of the stem is reduced to a glide. Thus we have:

[tʂ$^{i}_{\wedge}$ɚ] from [tʂi] + [ɚ]

[l$^{ü}_{\wedge}$ɚ] from [lü] + [ɚ]

1.2.3.4. In combination with the syllables which consist of a consonant alone, having no phonemic vowel (cf. 1.2.2.1.), the suffix /ɚ/ is added directly to the consonant. That is, the suffix replaces the phonetic [ɨ] or [$\wedge$] of these syllables:

[ts'ɚ] from [ts'ɨ] + [ɚ]

[tsɚ] from [tsɨ] + [ɚ]

[sɚ] from [sɨ] + [ɚ]

[tʃ'ɚ] from [tʃ'$\wedge$] + [ɚ]

[tʃɚ] from [tʃ$\wedge$] + [ɚ]

[ʃɚ] from [ʃ$\wedge$] + [ɚ]

1.2.3.5. Here we see that in addition to [ɚ˞], which is the phonetic shape of English postvocalic /r/ (bird /bərd/ [bɚ˞d], bear /bɛr/ [bɛɚ˞]), Chinese also has retroflexed vowels [ɑ˞], [u˞], and retroflexed vowel sequences [ə˞u˞] and [ɑ˞u˞]. Chinese speakers who use this retroflex suffix on many words will pronounce American medial and final r's but may also extend the retroflexion to preceding /ɑ/, /o/, /ū/, /ɔ/ and /ɑu/ vowels, producing a strongly retroflexed 'hollow' vowel sound.

Many Chinese speakers, however, use the retroflex suffix very little or not at all. These speakers will pronounce American medial and final r's as non-retroflex vowels or will drop them altogether, as speakers of some Southern and New England dialects do. If either over-retroflexion or lack of retroflexion interferes with the ability of a Chinese speaker to make himself understood, it should be the subject of drills. (See Table 1 above for additional comments on difficulties in pronouncing r caused by confusion with l.)

1.2.4. English Syllable Shapes.

1.2.4.1. An English syllable must contain at least one syllabic member. That member is usually a single vowel or a diphthong.

The English single vowel phonemes are given in section 1.1.4. They are /i, I, e, ɛ, æ, ɑ, ə, ɔ, o, U, u/. Four of these have diphthongal alternates (cf. section 1.1.4.):

/i/ is either [i] or [ij]

/e/ is either [e] or [ej]

/o/ is either [o] or [ow]

/u/ is either [u] or [uw]

In addition there are the three "true diphthongs," which do not alternate with single vowels: /ɑy/, /ɑw/ and /ɔy/ (as in bite, bout and boy).

English thus has seven possible phonetic diphthongs, all of which end in a high glide. Chinese has four diphthongs ending in a high vowel or glide. They are /ɑi/, /əi/, /ɑu/ and /əu/. A Chinese speaker will tend to substitute his pronunciation of these diphthongs for the 'closest' corresponding English diphthong, as follows:

Chinese	for	English
/ɑi/		/ɑy/
/əi/		/e/ ([ej] or [e])
/ɑu/		/ɑw/
/əu/		/o/ ([ow] or [o])

In these substitutions, the final vowels of the diphthong will probably be pronounced lower and less tense than the English norm. The first member of /ɑy/ will be more fronted and may sound like English /æ/. The first member of /ɑw/ will be backed and may sound almost like English /ɔ/.

The English diphthongs which do not have possible Chinese diphthongal equivalents are [ij], [uw], and /ɔy/. The closest Chinese equivalents to the first two are the single vowels /i/ and /u/. There is no Chinese counterpart for /ɔy/ that could be pronounced as one syllable. It will probably be pronounced as two syllables, the English /ɔ/ being replaced by Chinese /əu/ or /ɑu/ and English /y/ being replaced by Chinese /y/.

An English syllable may begin with any single vowel except /U/; it may end with any single vowel except /I/, /ɛ/, /æ/ or /U/.

1.2.4.2. The syllabic member of a syllable is usually a vowel or diphthong. However, some English syllables contain instead a syllabic consonant. The consonants which can act as syllabics in English are the lateral /l/ and the nasals /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/.

/l/ occurs frequently as a syllabic consonant in American English following the consonants /t/, /d/, /n/, /s/ and /z/. Note the following examples:

beetle	/bíṭl̩/
middle	/mɪdl̩/
funnel	/fə́nl̩/
missile	/mɪsl̩/
puzzle	/pʌ́zl̩/

The tick below the l denotes syllabicity. The mark over the vowel indicates stress (cf. section 1.3.1. below). A syllable formed by a syllabic consonant is always unstressed.

/n/ is often syllabic after /t/, /d/ and /s/:

button	/bə́tn̩/
hidden	/hɪdn̩/
listen	/lɪsn̩/

Many Americans in careless or informal speech pronounce the progressive ending "-ing" as a syllabic /n/. Thus riding is pronounced /ráydn̩/, kissing becomes /kɪsn̩/, and the pronunciation /ɪtn̩/ may be either eaten or eating. Compare:

I'm eating.	/áym ɪtn̩/
I've eaten.	/áyv ɪtn̩/

The word and is often reduced to a syllabic /n̩/ in rapid speech:

hide 'n' seek	/háydn̩sík/
hit 'n' run	/hɪ́tn̩rə́n/

Syllabic /m̩/ and /ŋ̩/ occur as reduced forms of unstressed words in careless or rapid speech:

keep 'em	/kípm̩/
I can go	/áykŋ̩gó/

Note that in the spellings 'n' and 'em we have informal orthographic conventions for indicating reduced speech forms.

1.2.4.3. A syllabic consonant is made by not releasing the closure for the preceding consonant until the new closure for the syllabic consonant is formed. For instance, since the tongue positions for /t/ and /n/ are the same, the sequence /tn̩/ is made by forming the closure for /t/, holding the closure, and pronouncing an /n/ (by opening the nasal passage). Because the closure is being held, a voiceless stop cannot be aspirated when it is followed by a syllabic consonant. A glottal stop often accompanies the transition between the two consonants:

button	[bə́t?n̩]

A Chinese speaker will tend to insert a vowel before a syllabic consonant. This will make his speech sound over-precise or perhaps British. Drills should focus on the transition to the syllabic consonant.

1.2.4.4. The syllabic center of an English syllable may be preceded by up to three and followed by up to four consonants:

spring	/sprɪŋ/
tempt	/tɛmpt/
waltzed	/wɔltst/

All words with four final consonants end in the bound morphemes /s/, for plural or third person singular, or /t/ /d/ for past tense. Since Chinese has no consonant clusters, all of these combinations will be difficult for the Chinese speaker. He will tend either to add a neutral vowel between members of the cluster,

[s^{ə}p^{ə}rɪŋ] for [sprɪŋ],

or to drop some of the members

[wɔls] for [wɔltst]

Details about problems with specific consonant clusters are contained in section 1.1.3. under the individual members of the clusters.

1.3. Prosodic Features.

The prosodic features of stress, intonation and rhythm are more difficult to analyze and describe precisely than are segmental phonemes. A great deal of research on English stress and intonation has been done, with the result that these systems are in general fairly well understood. There are, however, still a number of points of disagreement among scholars. Less attention has been devoted to Chinese, but the Chinese stress system is much simpler than English, and intonation is perhaps also somewhat less complicated. We will make no attempt here at a thorough description of English prosodic features. Our aim will be to outline the features of Chinese, dealing with English only as the features of English contrast with Chinese in such a way as to cause difficulty for the Chinese speaker learning English.

1.3.1. Stress.

Stress is the relative prominence given to a syllable within a word or to a word within a phrase or sentence. Intonation refers to the pattern of rise and fall in voice pitch over a sentence. Rhythm depends primarily on the succession of stressed and unstressed syllables in an utterance.

The mechanisms by which a stressed syllable acquires its relative prominence are not the same in Chinese and English. A stressed syllable in Chinese has an expanded pitch range and is

longer than an unstressed syllable but is not necessarily louder. A stressed syllable in English is longer and louder but may not entail any pitch change. As a result, Chinese speakers may exaggerate the pitch range of stressed syllables rather than making them louder. An English speaker is likely either to interpret this as a contrastive intonation or to ignore it as a nondistinctive 'accent'.

A word in Chinese consists of one or more stems, each in one of the four lexical tones, and possibly one or more bound suffixes, all in neutral or 5th tone. The stress must go on either the last or the next to last stem. If the last stem does not receive the stress, it loses its original lexical tone and is pronounced in neutral tone. It is also pronounced less distinctly, with vowels tending to become mid and consonants tending to undergo some reduction, aspirated stops, for example, losing their aspiration and unaspirated stops becoming voiced.

Phonetically, a Chinese word has strong stress on the final stressed stem, slightly weaker stress on the first stem, intermediate stress on all other stems, and no stress on particles and unstressed final stems. The only contrastive stress difference, however, is between stress and no stress.

The system of word stress in English is far more complicated. A satisfactory description of English stress has in fact not yet been achieved. There are three or four (authorities disagree) contrasting degrees of stress, and it is extremely difficult to establish rules for the placement of these four degrees of stress within a polysyllabic word. The addition of derivational affixes often causes a shift in the stress pattern of a root word, as, for example, in phótogràph, photógraphy, phòtográphical (´ representing primary stress, ` secondary stress, with weak-stress syllables unmarked). The problem is further complicated by reduction of vowels in weakly stressed syllables.

The relatively simple stress system of Chinese compared to the very complicated system of English, together with the tendency toward longer words and a much more complicated morphology in English, make English stress extremely difficult for the Chinese student to learn. Some speakers may tend to pronounce all English syllables with what sounds like approximately even stress. This tendency, usually accompanied by a failure to effect appropriate vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, is reinforced by the fact that for most Chinese students the study of English has been primarily through the medium of the printed page; where stress is unmarked it is easy to ignore the rhythms of speech. When these students do come to deal with the spoken language they will sometimes then go to the opposite extreme of completely omitting unstressed syllables. These problems can only be attacked through carefully designed intensive drills.

1.3.2. Intonation.

Chinese sentence intonation, like English, makes use of rising and falling pitch patterns. However, pitch in Chinese rises higher and falls lower than pitch in English. This is apparently due to the fact that intonational pitch patterns must be superim-

posed on the pitch contours of the individual morphemes of Chinese.

Many meanings carried by intonation in English are carried instead by voice quality (breathy, gruff, shrill, etc.) or by intonational particles in Chinese. This, together with the fact that comparable pitch patterns may serve different functions in the two languages, constitutes a problem for the Chinese student learning English.

In the following sections we will compare English and Chinese intonation patterns for various kinds of sentences.

1.3.2.1. Matter-of-fact Statements.

English uses a final falling intonation in matter-of-fact statements. Matter-of-fact statements in Chinese either have no intonation contour (the sentence simply ends wherever the final tone pitch ends) or, in longer sentences, may shift to a slightly lower key toward the end. This habit, transferred to English, may give the impression that the speaker has broken off in the middle of a sentence.

1.3.3.2. Yes-No Questions.

Chinese has two sorts of grammatical constructions for yes-no questions. One involves repeating the predicate in its negative form after it is stated positively:

Are	you	going?
nǐ	qù	bú qù*
you	go	not go

This has the same intonation as a matter-of-fact statement.

The other type of yes-no question involves the addition of a question particle at the end of the sentence. The most neutral question particle is ma.

Are	you	going?		Aren't	you	going?	
nǐ	qù	ma		nǐ	bú	qù	ma
you	go	(question particle)		you	not	go	(question particle)

These questions may also have neutral intonation. However, they are more often pronounced with a raised intonation contour, and there may be a slight drawl on the particle ma.

Another question particle is ba, the use of which implies the expectation of an answer in agreement with the statement contained in the question:

You	know,	don't you?		He	doesn't	know,	does he?
nǐ	zhīdào	ba		tā	bù	zhīdào	ba
you	know			he	not	know	

---

* Here we are no longer using phonetic symbols for the Chinese. See sections 1.4.2. and 1.4.3. for a description of this "romanization" system, which we will use throughout the remainder of the book whenever we are not discussing phonetic details.

A third question particle, ne is used with the double predicate type of question under certain circumstances, as for example in the following type of contrast:

You understand; (but) does he understand?

nǐ	dǒng	tā	dǒng	bù	dǒng	ne
you	understand	he	understand	not	understand	

The range of intonations possible for ba and ne questions is similar to that of ma questions.

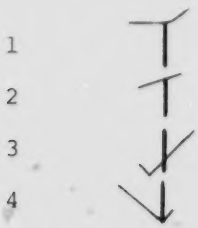
1.3.2.3. Incredulous Questions.

In Chinese, as in English, one can make a question out of any plain statement by raising the pitch at the end of the statement. The meaning carried is something like Do you mean to say...:

This is his?

zhè	shi	tā	de
this	is	he	(attributive marker)

Pitch rise occurs after the four lexical tones as follows:



After neutral tone it rises a few degrees.

An incredulous question in Chinese, as in English, may be said in an excited way, which for Chinese means the pitch of the whole sentence may be raised or the entire range may be expanded, and the voice quality may be 'tighter'.

Since the Chinese speaker has an optional rise in pitch range for yes-no and ma questions and a final pitch rise for incredulous questions, he may have no problem with English yes-no questions with final rise. However, if he carries over his neutral intonation instead, English speakers will not realize that he has asked a question.

1.3.2.4. Echo Questions.

Chinese and English echo questions have entirely different intonation patterns. English uses a high rising contour at the end of an echo question:

You're not going (you say)?

Chinese, on the other hand, uses a very low pitch range for the

entire echo question, combined with a soft, breathy voice quality. An echo question is also often accompanied by the question particle a:

nǐ	bú	qù	a
you	not	go	

This low tone of voice is likely to be heard as mumbling by an English speaker, who is not trained to expect it.

1.3.2.5. Information Questions (Wh-questions).

English uses falling tone at the end of a question which requests information. The center of the intonation contour is moveable, depending on the focus of attention:

Where are you going?

Chinese instead may have either neutral intonation or a slight terminal rise in pitch for a question which requires information:

Who is he?

tā	shì	shéi (↗)
he	is	who

If a question is asked in an excited tone of voice the whole pitch range may be raised. This, however, is because of the excitement, not because of the question. The same would be true of declarative sentences.

A Chinese speaker will have to learn falling pitch for Wh-questions in English just as he will for matter-of-fact statements.

1.3.2.6. Exclamatory Sentences.

Exclamations in English are generally indicated by falling intonation for statements and rising intonation for questions. In Chinese, they occur with certain exclamatory particles, together with low sentence intonation for statements and neutral intonation for questions:

School's out!

fàng	xué	le	ou
dismiss	school	(completed action)	(exclamatory)

Aren't you in bed yet?

nǐ	hái	méi	shàng	chuáng	a
you	still	not	ascend	bed	(exclamatory)

The final exclamatory particle may also be drawn out, either on a level pitch or with a gently falling pitch.

Here again the Chinese student will have to learn the English intonational patterns through extensive drill in imitation of a model.

1.4. The Chinese Writing System and Romanization of Chinese.

1.4.1. The Chinese writing system.

In the preceding sections we have given a detailed description of the phonological system of Chinese, with phonemes and phonetic variants represented in IPA symbols. If we were dealing with a language written in alphabetic script, the remaining step would be to relate our phonemicization to the normal orthography of the language. Chinese, however, is not normally written in an alphabetic orthography. Its writing system in logographic, with each symbol (graph or character) representing a morpheme, and conversely, each morpheme of the language being represented by a discrete symbol. Thus while alphabetic writing systems use a limited set of two to three dozen symbols, an average piece of modern Chinese writing may make use of four to five thousand different graphs, and specialized or pre-modern writings will draw on an additional vocabulary of two to three thousand graphs. The composition of this large number of different graphs is not completely unsystematic. Each of the more complicated characters is made up of simpler component parts which recur also in other characters or as whole characters in their own right. The majority of graphs can be analysed into a 'significant' component (often called the radical) and a 'phonetic' component. In some cases a character will have the same or almost the same pronunciation as its phonetic component. More often, however, the phonetic element will give only a vague hint at the pronunciation of a graph (just as the radical provides at best only a very vague hint at its meaning). Thus 功 gōng 'merit, achievement', and 攻 gōng 'to attack' both have the same pronunciation as their phonetic 工 gōng (which as a whole graph means labor; and 貢 gòng 'to offer in tribute' is different only in tone. 紅 hóng 'red' retains the same vowel and final consonant as the phonetic, but the initial consonant and the tone are different; and in 江 jiāng 'river' the only similarity to the phonetic is in the tone and the final consonant. Similarly, 眼 yǎn 'eye', 很 hěn 'very' and 限 xiàn 'limit' share the same phonetic, but the only phoneme that all three of these morphemes have in common is the final n. Also many graphs are composed of more than two parts, any one of which could be the phonetic; and some do not contain any element related to pronunciation. It will be seen then that while the task of learning to read and write Chinese is not quite so formidable as one might think on first learning that it is necessary to memorize six or seven thousand discrete characters, neither can the Chinese writing system be called a 'phonetic' orthography.

1.4.2. Romanization.

The non-alphabetic, non-phonetic nature of the Chinese writing system has resulted in the invention of a number of systems of transcription to be used as aids in learning the language and for recording pronunciation of individual characters in dictionaries. The first of these transcription systems were developed by European Christian missionaries who went to China in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Systems differed de-

pending on the native language of the inventor and the dialect of the part of China where he worked. As most of them make use of the Latin alphabet, these transcriptions are commonly known as romanizations. In recent decades many textbooks designed to teach the Chinese language to Westerners have been written in romanization. In some textbooks the romanization is accompanied by characters. In others the romanized text is duplicated in a separate volume; or the study of characters may be postponed until after the student has learned the sound system and basic grammatical patterns of the language and gained control of a basic vocabulary. Also, in the last twenty years romanization has become widely used in China, not as a substitute for the traditional writing system, but as the first step in learning to read in the elementary schools and in teaching the national standard language (which we refer to as Mandarin) to persons whose native dialect is something other than the standard, such as Cantonese, Shanghai or Fukienese.

Chinese words and sentences used as examples in the remainder of this book will be written in such a transcription system. The romanization which we have chosen, called pīnyīn (literally, 'phonetic spelling') is the system which is used in language teaching texts and dictionaries in China. It is also used in several sets of American textbooks and in several Chinese-English dictionaries recently published in America, and it is gaining increasingly wider usage in the United States and other Western countries. Other important romanizations are the Wade-Giles system, which has been widely used in American (and some European) publications since the beginning of the twentieth century, and the Yale system, which has been used in many textbooks published in the United States in the last twenty-five years.*

IPA symbols have been used in the earlier sections of this chapter because they are essential to a technical description of the sound system of a language and for phonological comparison of two languages. However, we have chosen to cite Chinese examples throughout the remainder of the book in romanization rather than IPA symbols because romanization is very easily written with the letters of an ordinary typewriter keyboard (plus tone marks) and because some acquaintance with a romanization will be useful to any reader who wishes to look futher (for example, to Chinese textbooks) for additional information on the Chinese language. We have selected pīnyīn rather than one of the other romanizations because it is the officially promulgated system in China and it is rapidly becoming the most widely used system in the West in language textbooks and in technical writings on the Chinese language. (Romanization does not have any general currency in Taiwan.)

*Currently the most important set of textbooks using the pīnyīn system is one authored by John DeFrancis and published by Yale University Press. The set consists of an elementary spoken language text, Beginning Chinese, followed by intermediate and advanced texts, and the Beginning Chinese Reader, followed by intermediate and advanced readers. At the back of Beginning Chinese there is a table comparing pīnyīn, Wade-Giles and Yale romanizations.

1.4.3 The PīnyĪn System.

1.4.3.1 Initials and Finals.

In the following tables, Chinese 'initials' (initial consonants) and 'finals' (vowel nucleus plus optional final consonant) are given according to the pīnyīn romanization. Any non-retroflexed Chinese syllable will be made up of either (1) initial + final + tone, or (2) final + tone (with 'zero' initial). Thus Zhōngguó 'China' is a two-syllable word, with the first syllable zhōng (literally 'middle') consisting of initial zh + final ōng + 1st tone ¯, and the second syllable guó 'nation' consisting of initial g + final uo + 2nd tone ´. An example of a syllable with zero initial is è 'hungry', which consists simply of the final e + 4th tone `. In Tables 3 and 4, pīnyīn spellings are given in upper case, and each initial or final is followed by its phonemic value as described in sections 1.1.1., 1.1.5., and 1.2.2. above. Reference to those sections, and especially to Figure 1 (for consonants) and figures 4 through 8 (for vowels), will provide the relevant phonetic information for any pīnyīn spelling.

Table 3

PīnyĪn Initials

Labials	B /p/	P /p'/	M /m/	F /f/	
Dental stops nasal & lateral	D /t/	T /t'/	N /n/		L /l/
Dental affricates and fricative	Z /ts/	C /ts'/		S /s/	
Retroflexes (affricates and fricatives)	ZH /tʃ/	CH /tʃ'/		SH /ʃ/	R /r/
Palatals	J /tś/	Q /tś'/		X /ś/	
Velars	G /k/	K /k'/		H /x/	

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Table 4

Pīnyīn Finals

Without Final Consonant							
Row 1	I /ø/[1]	A /ɑ/	E /ə/	AI /ɑi/	EI /əi/	AO /ɑu/	OU /əu/
Row 2[2]	I /i/[1]	IA /iɑ/	IE /iə/	IAI /iɑi/		IAO /iɑu/	IU /iəu/
Row 3[3]	U /u/	UA /uɑ/	UO,O /uə/	UAI /uɑi/	UI /uəi/		
Row 4[4]	Ü,U /ü/		ÜE,UE /üə/				

With Final Consonant						
Row 1	AN /ɑn/	EN /ən/	ANG /ɑŋ/	ENG /əŋ/	ONG /uŋ/	ER /ər/
Row 2[2]	IAN /iɑn/	IN /in/	IANG /iɑŋ/	ING /iŋ/	IONG /iuŋ/	
Row 3[3]	UAN /uɑn/	UN /uən/	UANG /uɑŋ/	WENG /uəŋ/		
Row 4[4]	ÜAN,UAN /üɑn/	ÜN,UN /ün/				

[1]The letter i has two different phonemic values. When it follows a dental or retroflex affricate or fricative (z, c, s; zh, ch, sh, r), it has zero phonemic value representing the non-phonemic, 'parasitic' vowel sound described in section 1.1.5.5. Thus zi is phonemically /ts/ and phonetically [tsɨ], ci is /ts'/ [ts'ɨ], etc. When it follows any letter other than those seven it represents the phoneme /i/. Thus bi is /pi/, ji /tśi/, etc.

[2]The finals of Row 2 are given as they are spelled when preceded by an initial consonant. If there is no initial consonant, these spellings are adjusted as follows: 1) y is added in front of i, in and ing to spell the whole syllables yi, yin and ying; 2) the i of iu is changed to y and an o is inserted, producing you; 3) for all other finals of the row, i is changed to y, producing ya, ye, yan etc. Row 2 finals do not combine with the following initials: f; z, c, s; zh, ch, sh, r; g, k, h.

[3]The finals of Row 3 (except weng) are given as they appear when

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preceded by an initial consonant. If there is no initial consonant, these spellings are adjusted as follows: 1) w is added in front of u, for the syllabic spelling wu; 2) the u of ui and un is changed to w and an e is inserted, producing wei and wen; 3) in the other finals of the row, u is changed to w, producing wa, wan, etc. The phonemic cluster /uə/ is spelled o after labial initials (b, p, m, f), uo after all other initials. Weng does not occur with an initial consonant and is therefore entered on the chart in the whole-syllable form. Row 3 finals cannot follow the initials j, q, x. (But see Note 4.)

[4]Row 4 finals combine with only five different initial consonants: the palatals j, q, x plus n and l; and each of these finals has two different spellings depending on the initials it follows. With n and l the spelling ü is used; thus nü /nü/ is distinguished from nu /nu/ (with a Row 3 final). But in combination with j,q,x, the dieresis is omitted from the spelling of the final, with resultant spellings ju /tśü/, que /tś'üə/, xuan /śüan/, etc. As Row 3 finals cannot combine with initials j, q, x (cf. Note 3), no ambiguity results from the fact that u thus represents /u/ and sometimes /ü/.

When there is no initial consonant, y is added to the front of the final and the diersis is omitted, producing the whole-syllable spellings yu /ü/, yue /üə/, yuan /üan/ and yun /ün/.

1.4.3.2. Retroflexed Syllables.

As explained in section 1.2.3., there is a morpheme, /ə[2]/ (er in pīnyīn), which is added as a suffix to a variety of stems. The changes in the phonetic shape of these stems which result from the addition of this morpheme are reflected in the pīnyīn spelling as indicated in the table on the following page.

On this table, note that the addition of the retroflex suffix cancels out certain of the distinctions (both phonetic and orthographic) among the stem forms. Perusal of the table from right to left will show that three of the retroflexed endings have multiple sources: 1) -ar (including -iar) comes from stems ending in -a, -ai and -an; 2) -er comes from stems ending in -e, -ei, -en and -i (phonemic /ø/; 3), -ier comes from stems ending in -i (phonemic /i/) and -in.

1.4.3.3. Tones.

Syllables are marked for tone in pinyin as follows:

1st tone	ā	
2nd tone	á	
3rd tone	ǎ	
4th tone	à	
neutral tone	a	(unmarked)

Refer to section 1.2.1. for a phonetic description of the tones.

Table 5

Retroflexed Syllables in Pīnyīn

Stem Ending	Examples	Process	Resulting Retroflexed Syllables
-a, -o, -e, -ng -u (from Row 3)	fǎ, xià, cuò, zhè, dèng, tù	add -r	fǎr, xiàr, cuòr, zhèr, dèngr, tùr
-ai, -ei, -an, -en	gài, wèi, wán, xiàn, fēn	drop -i or -n and add -r	gàr, wèr, wár, xiàr, fēr
-i following z- and zh- series of initials (phonemic /ø/)	zì, cí, shì	drop -i and add -er	zèr, cér, shèr
-i other than above (phonemic /i/)	jī, xí, yì	add -er	jiēr, xiér, yièr
-ü and Row 4 -u (all phonemic /ü/)	lǘ, qù, yú		lüér, quèr, yuér
-in	jīn, xìn	drop -n and add -er	jiēr, xièr

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CHAPTER 2: MORPHOLOGY: WORD FORMATION IN ENGLISH AND IN CHINESE

2.0. Introduction to Morphology.

One of the most basic things that a Chinese student must learn about English is the ways in which different word forms function. We may divide the discussion about the function of word forms into the two areas inflections and derivations. In both these areas, there is considerable contrast between English and Chinese.

A brief glance at the table below will reveal that Chinese contains none of the inflections which exist in English. The obvious implication is that most of the inflectional patterns in English will prove to be troublesome to the Chinese student. In the area of derivational forms, we can see from the chart that some of the derivational processes in English can be compared with, but not equated to, similar processes in Chinese. Those derivational processes in English which produce words with new meanings (e.g. friendly-unfriendly, act-counteract, millionaire-multimillionaire) have many counterparts in Chinese. On the other hand, those processes which derive words of one class from words of another class (e.g. poor-poorly, white-whiten, rain-rainy) are much more abundant in English than they are in Chinese. The reasons for this will be discussed in the section on word classes.

Table 6
Some Contrasting Points Between English and Chinese Morphological Patterns

Morphological Patterns	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Inflections:			
plural inflection on nouns	yes	no	2.3.
present tense, 3rd person sing. in verbs	yes	no	2.5.
past tense and past participle in verbs	yes	no	2.6.
case in pronouns	yes	no	2.7.1.
possessive pronouns, absolute form	yes	no	2.7.2.
Derivations: comparative and superlative adjectives	yes	superlatives by prefixing, comparatives by syntax	2.10.

Morphological Patterns	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
feminine from masculine: actor-actress	yes	feminine form derived by prefixing	2.11.
derivation of words of one class from words of another class	many	much fewer than English	2.12.
other new meanings through affixing: un-, in-, anti- etc.	many	many	2.13.
Other Variations: variation in noun gender: cow-bull	yes	only by prefixing	2.11.
determiners: this, that, these, those	yes	plural-sing. not reflected in determiner	5.5.
definite and indefinite articles	yes	no	5.1.
possession with different types of nouns	yes	no	2.5. 5.11.2.
variation in ordinal numbers	yes	no	2.16.

2.1. Inflectional Affixes in English.

Many Chinese speakers are confused when confronted with the English systems of inflectional affixes. Since Chinese does not have the inflectional systems that exist in English, they may feel that these inflectional affixes are not important because they do not add any significant information to an utterance. If Chinese can get along without cumbersome inflectional affixes, why should there be other languages that cannot function without such affixes? In the sentence:

She sees two birds.

the Chinese speaker may feel that the -s suffix on sees and birds is redundant. The speaker and hearer already know that the verb sees has a third person singular subject (the subject of the sentence, she, precedes the verb, sees) and that there is more than

one bird involved (the number two precedes the noun, bird). In this example, the two inflectional suffixes (third person singular present tense and the plural) do not carry much functional load; that is, they do not signal meaningful differences. But there are times when they alone account for differences in meaning:

The sheep sleeps near Bo Peep.
The sheep sleep near Bo Peep.
The bee stung me.
The bees stung me.

In Chinese, when number is not important in a sentence, it is simply not indicated. When a Chinese speaker wishes to indicate number, he would use numerical modifiers. In English, the function of these numerical modifiers is in part taken over by the plural suffix -s.

The tense inflections on English verbs also have no counterparts in Chinese. Instead, there are aspect markers that carry some of the function that tense inflections serve in English. Where aspect markers are lacking, time adverbs are added when time is of importance in a sentence; otherwise, tense is simply not indicated.

Perhaps the most stubborn obstacle for the Chinese student in learning the inflectional affixes of English is the Chinese way of conceiving of things. The Chinese student must stop thinking in terms of such things as numerical modifiers and time adverbs, and begin thinking in terms of inflectional affixes. This explains why it is easier for a European to learn the inflectional affixes of English than it is for a student whose native language lacks inflectional affixes.

If the instructor points out to the Chinese student at an early stage that these inflectional suffixes, which the Chinese student may at first feel to be superfluous, do signal significant differences in meaning by giving him sample sentences such as the four above, the Chinese student will realize the importance of the inflectional suffixes and will be more favorably disposed toward learning them.

2.2. The /s/, /z/, /Iz/ Suffix.

The /s/, /z/, /Iz/ inflectional suffix serves three different grammatical functions in English: 1) it marks the plural of most count nouns (boys, tables), 2) it marks the possessive of most animate nouns (men's store, cat's pajamas), and 3) it marks all verbs in the present tense which have a third person singular subject (he plays, Mary swims).

The phonological characterization of this suffix is as follows:

1) If the word ends with /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, or /dʒ/, add /Iz/.
2) If the word ends with a voiceless sound (other than those in 1), add /s/.

3) All other sounds (i.e. voiced, other than those in 1), add /z/.

The initial problem with the correct recognition and production of these affixes is a phonological one. Chinese does not have the /z/ sound. Furthermore, the /s/ sound never occurs in syllable final position in Chinese. The contrast between /s/ and /z/ in final position, then, is difficult for Chinese speakers from the standpoint of the phonological differences between the two languages. Fortunately, the difference between /s/ and /z/ affixes does not signal differences in meaning.* When a Chinese speaker hears /s/ or /z/ when used as a suffix, he will recognize it as one manifestation of the -s suffix. Conversely, if in trying to produce the -s suffix, the Chinese speaker fails to distinguish clearly between /s/ and /z/, he would be understood just the same. /Iz/ differs from /s/ and /z/ sufficiently that there is no problem in distinguishing it from /s/ and /z/.

One of the first things that a Chinese student must learn about the -s suffix is the production of the correct forms (/s/, /z/, /Iz/) after specific words in accordance with the three rules above. The Chinese student should not merely memorize these rules through rote memorization, but must practice producing the sounds until they become automatic. Only then will the Chinese student have internalized the rules.

2.3. Number Inflection.

2.3.1. The Plural Suffix.

In English, most count nouns are marked with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ suffix in the plural. Count nouns not marked in any way (sheep) or marked in some different way (ox-oxen) are called irregular count nouns. The plural form of the irregular count nouns will simply have to be memorized by the student.

As pointed out eariler, nouns in Chinese are not inflected for plurality:

She	sees	bird(s).
tā	kànjian	niǎo.
she	see	bird

She	sees	one	bird
tā	kànjian	yī zhī	niǎo
she	see	one (classifier)	bird

*When /s/ and /z/ are not affixes, but word final consonants, they of course do signal differences in meaning:

face-phase advice-advise sparse-spars

The correct production and recognition of pairs like these pose a greater problem than do the correct production and recognition of /s/ and /z/ affixes.

She sees several birds.

tā	kànjian	jǐ	zhī	niǎo
she	see	several	(classifier)	bird

In the second sentence, singularity is indicated by the word for one. In the third sentence, plurality is indicated by the word for several. In the first sentence, number is simply not indicated; the speaker does not feel that number is of interest here.

Practice with the singular vs. plural nouns in actual sentences will help the Chinese student to gain awareness of the plural inflection in English and will help him learn to produce the plural suffix automatically.

A fact that must be pointed out to the Chinese student is that English speakers conceive of certain nouns only in the plural form. Examples are slacks, scissors, and pincers. The Chinese student is accustomed to thinking of these things as singular:

a pair of slacks			a pair of scissors		
yì	tiáo	kùzi	yì	bǎ	jiǎndāo
one	(classifier)	slack(s)	one	(classifier)	scissor(s)

The Chinese student is liable to use the singular form for this type of words when he means a pair of X's:

*This scissor is not sharp.
*I bought a trouser yesterday.

The Chinese student must overcome this habit when speaking English. Special attention to this type of noun in practice drills will be helpful.

2.3.2. Problems With Nouns Having Irregular Plural Forms.

There is no way for a foreign student to learn the irregular nouns other than sheer memorization. Practicing the irregular forms in natural language situations will help the student remember the irregular forms more quickly. For example, it is more effective to have the student drill sentences like:

There was a herd of oxen by the steam.
One ox was wounded in the foot.
It took several herdsmen to carry it to a cart.
Then another herdsman tended it on the way home.

rather than simply memorize sets of nouns like:

ox - oxen
sheep - sheep
knife - knives
phenomenon - phenomena

One pitfall is that there seem to be some patterns among irregular nouns, but these patterns cannot be relied upon:

We have:	wife	wives
	knife	knives
	leaf	leaves
but:	chief	chiefs
	fife	fifes

An additional problem that should be mentioned is the irregular spelling of some plural nouns. Even with nouns that have the regular plural inflection phonetically, the spelling may be irregular:

We have:	tomato	tomatoes
	potato	potatoes
	hero	heroes
but:	ditto	dittos
	buffalo	buffaloes, buffalos, or buffalo

Irregularities such as these are bound to be troublesome for the Chinese student. The instructor should devote extra attention to these problems in class.

2.4. The Third Person Singular Present Tense Suffix on the Verb.

In English, all verbs in the present tense are marked with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/ affix when the subject of the sentence is third person singular. This particular inflection in English has a rather low functional load, that is, a difference in meaning is rarely signaled only by this form. Usually, the third person singular subject is indicated in the subject itself and it is redundant to repeat this fact in the verb. The Chinese student may be especially impatient with this particular inflection. But whether he likes it or not, he must master it in order to speak correct English.

This inflection signals a difference in meaning only when the subject is a noun which is not inflected or only optionally inflected for plurality:

The sheep sleeps by Bo Peep.
The sheep sleep by Bo Peep.
The deer is crossing the highway.
The deer are crossing the highway.
The fish is eating up all the toads.
The fish are eating up all the toads.
The buffalo doesn't like hunters.
The buffalo don't like hunters.

Practice with a few contrasting examples like the above will make the Chinese student realize the function of the third person singular present tense inflection. Then, he can proceed to use it in sentences where this inflection does not reflect a difference in meaning, but nonetheless is important grammatically.

2.5. The Possessive Suffix.

In English, animate nouns are marked with the /s/, /z/, /Iz/

suffix to indicate possession. The phonological realizations of this suffix have been discussed earlier. (See section 2.2.) The Chinese student needs practice in order to produce the correct suffix on words that end with different sounds.

The difficulty that Chinese students may have with the correct usage of the possessive suffix is increased by the fact that possession is expressed differently with pronouns, animate nouns, and inanimate nouns in English. In Chinese, the possessive form is the same whether the possessor is a pronoun, animate noun, or inanimate noun; the attributive marker de is added to indicate possession in all these cases:

her leg		
tā	de	tuǐ
she	(attributive marker)	leg

that man's leg				
nèi	ge	rén	de	tuǐ
that	(classifier)	person	(attributive marker)	leg

the leg of the chair		
yǐzi	de	jiǎo
chair	(attributive marker)	leg

The Chinese student may apply the possessive suffix to subject pronouns and inanimate nouns:

*she's leg
*the chair's leg (Although this isn't wrong, it is not as common as the leg of the chair.)

The Chinese student must remember to differentiate among the three types of possessors in order to use the correct possessive formation with each of the three different types of possessors. See section 5.11.2. for more discussion about the possessives formed with animate and inanimate nouns.

2.6. Tense Inflection.

2.6.1. Formation of English Past and Past Participle Verbs.

As pointed out earlier, verbs in Chinese are not inflected. In learning to use verbs in English, the student must first of all learn what the different tenses in English mean. It is all too easy for a student to associate the different tenses in English with different points in relative time. For instance, the present tense is associated with present time, the past tense with past time, the future tense with future time. In reality, the names of these tenses can only suggest their meaning.

The present tense is usually used to indicate present time; but it can be used to indicate future time also when a time adverbial is present:

The boat leaves at five o'clock.

This, and other cases where tense does not neatly correspond to time, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4. An additional problem is that not all tenses are as simple as present, past, and future. There are many complex tenses (future perfect, past perfect, subjunctive, etc.) in English which simply cannot be related to logical time. The student must learn the situations under which each tense in English is used. In Chinese, aspect markers and time adverbs are the main devices used to indicate time. Tense in English cannot be associated with either one of these devices in Chinese. The student can learn the tenses in English only in the context of English sentences, he cannot relate them to anything in his native language.

There are two inflections in English that apply to the tense system of verbs: past tense and past participle. All verbs in English may be divided into two groups: strong and weak. The former consists of those which have irregular morphological forms and is a small but important minority of the total number of verbs. The latter group, to which the majority of the total number of verbs belong, consists of those verbs which conform to a set of morphological rules.

Verbs like talk, walk, open, and form are examples of weak verbs in English. They conform to the past tense and past participle inflections outlined below (the suffixes for both of these inflections coincide for the weak verbs in English):

1) If the word ends with /t/ or /d/, add /Id/.

2) If the word ends with a voicelss sound (other than /t/), add /t/.

3) All other sounds (voiced sounds other than /d/), add /d/.

As we pointed out in the first chapter, the Chinese student may have difficulty producing a truly voiced /d/. But this will probably not hinder intelligibility. He will still be able to distinguish /t/ and /d/ in word final position by aspirating the former and not aspirating (and probably not voicing) the latter. Of course, /Id/ differs sufficiently from both /t/ and /d/ that there will be no difficulty in distinguishing it from the others. Although it would be nice if the student could learn to pronounce /t/, /d/, /Id/ accurately, it is not absolutely necessary for him to do so as long as he can distinguish among them in pronouncing and in hearing them.

2.6.2. Irregular Verbs in English.

Irregular (strong) verbs in English form a minority of the total number of verbs. However, they are very important because many of the most common verbs, those a foreign student is likely to encounter in the early stage of his experience with English, are irregular. These are some examples of the most common verbs in English which are irregular: be, have, see, sleep, eat, hear, drink, sit, stand, write, read, draw, throw, go, come.

It is difficult for a native speaker of English to realize how troublesome irregular verbs can be to a foreign student learning English. The student must memorize the inflected forms for each irregular verb. Only extensive practice will help him internalize the irregular forms. Fortunately, he will have many

occasions to use the most common irregular verbs in his early contact with English, so that he will probably learn them very soon.

One factor that makes irregular verbs so troublesome is that there is no way of knowing from the form of the verb itself whether it is a strong or weak verb. A more important factor is that the inflectional patterns that do occur in strong verbs is unsystematic and unproductive. That is, two verbs can be phonetically similar, but have completely different inflectional forms:

We have:	sing	sang	sung
	ring	rang	rung
	spring	sprang	sprung
but:	fling	flung	flung
	bring	brought	brought
We have:	bend	bent	bent
	lend	lent	lent
	spend	spent	spent
but:	tend	tended	tended
	blend	blended	blended
We have:	light	lit	lit
but:	bite	bit	bitten
	fight	fought	fought
	slight	slighted	slighted
We have:	sit	sat	sat
	spit	spat	spat
but:	hit	hit	hit
	knit	knitted	knitted

Furthermore, there are often "false inflections" of word forms that are similar in sound but come from completely different stems. Thus *founded* is not the past tense form of *find*, and *rent* is not the past tense form of *rend*. Similarly, *bore* is either the present tense form of the verb meaning *to drill* or the past tense form of the verb *bear*; and *lay*, the transitive verb, is often confused with the past tense form of the intransitive verb *lie*.

Because there are no inflectional verb forms in Chinese, the irregularities in English verb forms are especially difficult for the Chinese student to learn. Practicing the irregular forms in natural language situations will help the student remember the irregularities more quickly. For example, it is fruitless to have the student memorize sets of inflectional changes like:

buy	bought	bought
eat	ate	eaten
see	saw	seen

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or at best, the Chinese student will learn these changes very laboriously. It is much more effective to practice the irregular forms in the context of real sentences:

Whom did you see?
I saw Matilda.
Has she seen the doctor?
No, but she bought some aspirin.

The student is more likely to remember what form of the verb he used in a real sentence than what form of the verb he used in nonsensical practice patterns like see-saw-seen.

A final problem that merits discussion here is that Chinese students have more trouble spelling the irregular verbs correctly than the regular verbs. The past tense and past participle of regular verbs are always spelled with -ed added to the present tense. Irregular verbs, on the other hand, often have unusual spellings such as read /rid/ and read /red/, lead /lid/ and led /led/, feed /fid/ and fed /fed/, hear /hIr/ and heard /herd/. The spelling of the irregular verbs must be learned just as their irregular pronunciations are learned.

2.7. Pronoun Inflections.

2.7.1. Pronouns in Chinese lack the subjective-objective case inflections as well as gender inflections.

		Singular					Plural			
				3rd person						
		1st person	2nd person	masculine	feminine	neuter	1st person	2nd person	3rd person	interrogative pronoun
English	subj.	I	you	he	she	it	we	you	they	who
	obj.	me		him	her		us		them	whom
Chinese		wǒ	nǐ	tā			wǒmen	nǐmen	tāmen	shéi

Figure 10: Pronouns in English and Chinese

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The Chinese student may have trouble distinguishing the subjective case of a pronoun from its objective counterpart. The most common error resulting from this is the use of the subjective case where the objective case should be used. The distinction between he and she, and between him and her, is also often neglected by the Chinese student, since this distinction does not exist in his native language. It is easier for the Chinese student to distinguish it from he-she, him-her. This may be due partly to the fact that it in Chinese does not often occur in the same contexts as he-she, him-her, and partly to the fact that, in the Chinese mind, the difference between it and he-she or him-her is greater than that between he and she, him and her. In order to learn the pronoun inflections in English, the Chinese student simply must learn some distinctions that are lacking in his native language. Only extensive practice will help him internalize these distinctions.

2.7.2. In English there are two sets of possessive pronoun forms, the possessive pronominal adjectives and the absolute possessive pronouns. The adjectival forms modify nouns while the absolute forms replace the adjectival possessive and the modified noun. In Chinese there are no discrete possessive pronoun forms at all. Possession is expressed for pronouns, just as for nouns, by the addition of the attributive marker de (cf. section 2.5.), and an absolute is formed by the simple omission of the modified noun:

That's	my	book.		That's	mine.
Nà	shi	wǒde	shú.		Nà	shi	wǒde.

See Figure 11 for the full set of English Possessive Pronouns.

		Singular					Plural			
				3rd person						
		1st person	2nd person	masculine	feminine	neuter	1st person	2nd person	3rd person	interrogative pronoun
English	adj.	my	your	his	her	its	our	your	their	whose
	abs.	mine	yours		hers		ours	yours	theirs	
Chinese		wǒ de	nǐ de	tā de			wǒmen de	nǐmen de	tāmen de	shéi de

Figure 11: Possessive Pronouns in English and Chinese

Note that for three of the possessive pronouns on the chart one form serves both the adjectival and the absolute functions. For each of the others, however, there are two distinct forms, the absolute form derived from the adjectival form by the addition of /z/ (spelled s), except in first person singular, where mine is derived from my by the addition of /n/ (/may/ + /n/ = /mayn/).

Because the Chinese 'pronoun plus attributive de' serves both the adjectival and the absolute functions, the Chinese student will have difficulty learning to separate the two sets of English forms, often producing sentences like Is this yours book? The tendency to use the /z/ form is reinforced by the fact that the three possessives that have only one form do end in /z/, and possessives for nouns (both adjectival and absolute) end in 's: John's book; the book is John's.

2.8. Word Classes.

The most important word classes in English are: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. The word classes in Chinese do not coincide with those in English. Because word classes have mutually exclusive functions in a sentence, the Chinese student must learn to distinguish among the different word classes in English. The first question is: How do we define the word classes in English? There are two approaches. The first is a morphological one. From the form of certain words and the derivational and inflectional processes that they can undergo, we can tell what word class they belong to. For example, we know that slowly, quietly, and rapidly are adverbs because they have the adverbial suffix -ly. We know that agreed, ate, and bought are verbs because they are the past tense of verbs. Similarly, we know that white, bright, and pretty are adjectives because we can derive their comparative forms by adding the suffix -er. We also know that write, sleep, hit are verbs because we can form the past tense of these words. In all these words, there is either something in the form of the word or some inflectional or derivational potential that signals to us that these words belong to certain word classes. But this method of finding out what word class a certain word belongs to is not totally reliable. By this method of classification, many words in English will be found to belong to more than one word class. For example, the word act is a noun in that we can arrive at its plural form by adding the suffix -s. It is also a verb because we can obtain its past tense by adding the suffix -ed. The word quiet is an adjective because we can derive its comparative form by adding the suffix -er. It is also a verb because we can form its past tense by adding -ed. We also know that it is a noun (In the quiet of the night...) but we cannot demonstrate that it is a noun by the method presented above.

This brings us to the second method of classifying words: classification by the syntactic function of a word in a sentence. In this approach, the class of a word is defined by the relationship of the word to other words in the sentence. This method has two advantages. It can tell us to what word class a certain word belongs in a certain sentence. In our example In the quiet of the night..., quiet is preceded by the definite article. This signals to us that quiet functions as a noun in this sentence.

A second advantage of this method of classification is that each word, as it is used in a specific sentence, belongs to one and only one word class. Thus, quiet is a verb in Please quiet down, an adjective in The street is quiet at night, and a noun in The quiet of the night... Admittedly, it may belong to more than one class when it is used differently in different sentences; but each occurrence of it belongs to only one word class. This lends greater determinacy to our definition of word classes than the first method.

Words in the English language lend themselves fairly well to the first method of word classification. There are many words that would fall into more than one class if classified morphologically, but most English words can be classified into one or another of these classes. The picture is quite different in Chinese. Most words in Chinese cannot be classified morphologically into only one word class. For one thing, most words in Chinese are formed in such a way that one cannot tell merely from the form of the words themselves what class of words they belong to. If one uses the criterion of derivational potentials, only part of the vocabulary can be classified, because derivations in Chinese are not as bountiful as in English. The second method of classification is much more applicable in Chinese.

In Chinese, just as in English, words can be classified decisively in accordance with the function they serve in the sentence. We pointed out earlier that the same word may serve different functions in different sentences and therfore belong to different word classes. We will present further examples in English:

Astronomy interests Tom.	(Interests is a verb.)
Tom has many interests.	(Interests is a noun.)
This is a fast train.	(Fast is an adjective.)
Bill drives fast.	(Fast is an adverb.)
Please put the potatoes in the bag.	(Bag is a noun.)
Please bag the potatoes.	(Bag is a verb.)

The same word functioning differently in different sentences is a common phenomenon in English. But it is even more common in Chinese. Many words in English must undergo a derivational process before they can take on a different function, but very often, comparable words in Chinese can serve several functions without any change in their form:

He is ill.	(Ill is an adjective.)
tā | bing le	(bing is a verb.)
he | become ill (perfect marker)	
What kind of illness is this?	(Illness is a derived noun.)
zhè | shì | shémme | bing	(bing is a noun.)
this | (copula) | what | illness	

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I'm happy. (Happy is an adjective.)
wǒ | hěn | kuàilè. (kuàilè is an adjective.)
I | very | to be happy

Happiness is more important than money. (Happiness is a derived noun.)
kuàilè | bǐ | jīnqián | zhòngyào (kuàilè is a noun.)
happiness | compare | money | important

The above examples illustrate the fact that the derivation of words of one class from words of another class is not as common in Chinese as it is in English. In recent years, the derivational processes in Chinese seem to have become somewhat more developed, perhaps due to the influence of European languages. But still, these processes are not as rich in Chinese as they are in English. For this reason, Chinese students may have trouble learning the many derived words in English.

2.9. Problems With Word Classes.

2.9.1. Word classes in English do not coincide with those in Chinese. Aside from the fact that words in Chinese cannot be assigned to morphological classes as readily as words in English, the syntactic word classes in the two languages do not coincide.

The first discrepancy is that adjectives in Chinese are syntactically very much like verbs. For this reason, many grammarians of Chinese treat adjectives as a subclass of verbs:

She dances on the stage.
tā | zài | tái- | shang | tiàowǔ
she | at | stage | top | dance.

She is pretty on the stage.
tā | zài | tái- | shang | hěn | piàoliang
she | at | stage | top | very | pretty.

Notice that the Chinese words /tiàowǔ/ dance and /piàoliang/ pretty combine with other words in the sentence in the exact same way. In English, pretty differs from dances in that the copula is must be inserted before pretty, an adjective. In Chinese, however, adjectives and verbs do have some functions that they do not share; but they have enough functions in common that we may consider adjectives a subclass of verbs. This treatment also coincides with the feeling of the native speaker of Chinese, who considers adjectives and verbs as one word class. For this reason, Chinese students may fail to distinguish adjectives from verbs in English. In section 4.5., we will discuss one problem that results from the failure to make this important distinction in English. We will continue to speak of adjectives in Chinese, but with the understanding that they are a subclass of verbs.

2.9.2. Classifiers in Chinese.

A second point of comparison between the word classes of English and those of Chinese is the existence of a class of words called classifiers. This is a class of words in Chinese that has only an imperfect parallel in English.

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In Chinese, most nouns, when preceded by a demonstrative and/or a number must be preceded immediately by a classifier. The ordering of all these elements is as follows:

demonstrative + number + classifier + noun

The classifier varies from noun to noun, but most classifiers are shared by a class of nouns. There is no pre-determined way of pairing classifiers with nouns, but their co-occurrence does form certain patterns. For example, zhī is the classifier that often occurs with long flat objects, zhāng is a classifier that often occurs with thin sheetlike objects. But these patterns cannot be used as an infallible guide.

There is nothing in English comparable to the classifier in Chinese. The nearest thing is the measure words (a sack of sugar, a row of houses). In Chinese, measure words are a subclass of classifiers.

Measure words used in both English and Chinese:

one dozen oranges			a row of houses		
yì	dá	júzi	yì	pái	fángzi
one	dozen	orange	one	row	house

Classifiers used in Chinese, but not in English:

this house			several books		
zhèi	dòng	fángzi	jǐ	běn	shū
this	(classifier)	house	several	(classifier)	book

It is the second type of classifiers that has no parallel in English. They cannot be translated into English and are simply deleted in the translation.

Fortunately, this difference between the two languages does not cause much problem for the Chinese student of English. He only has to learn that this kind of classifier does not exist in English. On the other hand, a native speaker of English studying Chinese will find this system of classifiers to be a real trouble-maker.

2.10. Comparative and Superlative Forms.

The superlative is expressed in Chinese in a way very similar to that in English. In English, it is usually expressed by adding either the suffix -est or the word most to the adjective or the adverb. In Chinese, superlative is expressed by adding the word /zùi/ most in front of the Chinese word which corresponds to the adjective or adverb in English:

This car is the fastest.					
zhèi	bù	chēzi	zùi	kuài	
this	(classifier)	car	most	fast	

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He works most slowly.					
tā	zuòshì	zuò	de	zùi	màn
he	work	do		most	slowly

The comparative is expressed in Chinese in several different ways. When only one of the things being compared is stated in the sentence, the most common patterns of comparison are exemplified by the following:

	This car is faster.					
	zhèi	bù	chēzi	bǐjiào		kuài
	this	(classifier)	car	comparatively		fast
or	zhèi	bù	chēzi	kuài	yìdiǎr	
	this	(classifier)	car	fast	a bit	
	He walks more slowly.					
	tā	zǒu	de	bǐjiào		màn
	he	walk		comparatively		slowly
or	tā	zǒu	de	màn	yìdiǎr	
	he	walk		slow	a bit	

When both of the things being compared are stated in the sentence, the most common patterns of comparison in Chinese are exemplified by the following sentences:

	Mrs. Li is fatter than Mr. Li.				
	Lǐ	tàitai	bǐ	Lǐ xiānsheng	pàng
	Li	Mrs.	compare	Li Mr.	fat
	Mrs. Li runs faster than Mr. Li.				
	Lǐ	tàitai	bǐ	Lǐ xiānsheng	pǎo de kuài
	Li	Mrs.	compare	Li Mr.	run fast

The complexity of the comparative forms in Chinese does not pose much of a problem to the Chinese student of English since the pattern in English is much simpler than that in Chinese. The Chinese student simply has to substitute the usage of the syntactic constructions in Chinese with the usage of the derived comparative forms in English. It is the irregularities in the derivation of the comparative and superlative forms in English that will cause some trouble to the Chinese student. Aside from several different rules for deriving the regular comparative and superlative forms in English, there are a number of adjectives and adverbs that have irregular comparative and superlative forms which must be memorized individually by the student. As for the regular comparative and superlative forms of English, the rules for deriving them are as follows:

1) All one-syllable adjectives and adverbs are marked with -er suffix in the comparative and -est in the superlative.

2) All two-syllable adjectives and adverbs ending with the sound /i/ are marked with -er in comparative and -est in the superlative.

3) All other forms are preceded by more in the comparative and most in the superlative.

4) All superlative forms are almost always preceded by the (see section 5.12.2.).

Aside from mastering these several rules in English, the Chinese student must learn the seemingly innumerable exceptions to them. There are forms that outrightly deviate from the above rules:

good - better - best
well - better - best
bad - worse - worst

There are others that seem to conform to these rules, but only imperfectly:

able - more able - most able (in conformity with the rules)
able - abler - ablest (not quite in conformity)
ably - more ably - most ably (contradicts rule 2.)

Fortunately, most of the irregular comparative and superlative forms in English are those that occur commonly and the foreign student will have more chances of encountering them at an early stage. Again, practice with the irregular forms in actual sentences would be more effective than having the student memorize meaningless utterances like good-better-best.

2.11. Noun Inflection for Gender.

In English, many nouns have masculine versus feminine forms. One group applies to persons:

duke - duchess
actor - actress
hero - heroine
comedian - comedienne
laundryman - laundrywoman

A second group refers to certain animals. With most animals, there is no masculine-feminine distinction in English. However, with some, the masculine-feminine distinction is made:

bull	cow
cock	hen
stallion	mare
gander	goose
buck	doe
boar	sow

In Chinese, the masculine-feminine distinction is usually not made:

actor-actress	author-authoress	bull-cow	cock-hen
yǎnyúan	zuòjiā	niú	jī

There are a few exceptions to this:

prince	princess	emperor	empress
kōng-zǐ	kōng-zhǔ	huáng-tì	huáng-hòu

But most of these exceptions are with nouns that refer to titles.

In Chinese, when the speaker wishes to emphasize the gender of a noun, he may sometimes add a masculine or feminine prefix, sometimes an adjective denoting gender:

cow		bull	
mǔ	niú	kōng	niú
(feminine prefix)	bovine	(masculine prefix)	bovine

hen		cock	
mǔ	jī	kōng	jī
(f. prefix)	chicken	(m. prefix)	chicken

authoress		heroine	
nǚ	zuòjiā	nǚ	yīngxióng
female	author	female	hero

When the Chinese speaker does not particularly wish to emphasize the gender of a noun, he would not indicate it. When speaking English, he may continue to disregard the gender of nouns, even where it is important to make the distinction between masculine and feminine. For instance, he may call a cock a hen, a bull a cow, etc. The Chinese student must first of all rid himself of the habit of thinking that all nouns are neuter. He must then learn which nouns have the masculine-feminine distinction in English. There is no one particular way of deriving the feminine forms from the masculine forms, especially with nouns that refer to animals. The Chinese student would do best to memorize the masculine and feminine forms as separate lexical items.

2.12. Derivation of Words of One Class From Another.

In English, there are many ways in which words of one class can be derived from those of another class. As we noted in 2.8., words in Chinese do not belong to morphological classes as clearly as words in English. Many words can function differently in different sentences without any changes in their forms. This is one reason why there are fewer grammatical derivations in Chinese than in English. Some English grammatical derivations are:

Adjective - Adverb	slow-slowly, possible-possibly
Adjective - Noun	possible- possibility righteous-righteousness
Adjective - Verb	white-whiten, equal-equalize little-belittle, large-enlarge
Noun - Adverb	human-humanly, length-lengthwise day-daily
Noun - Adjective	education-educational Japan-Japanese, rain-rainy
Noun - Verb	danger-endanger, beauty-beautify improve-improvement educate-education

Verb - Adjective interest-interesting-interested
comfort-comfortable

There are some grammatical derivations in Chinese. Those that bear similarities to grammatical derivations in English would be a good starting point to introduce Chinese students to the innumerable derivational processes in English. By reflecting upon similar processes in their native language, Chinese students will understand the derivations in English more readily. Below is a chart of the few derivational suffixes in Chinese that bear similarities to derivations in English:

Chinese Suffix	Comparable English Suffix	Examples
-huà literally, 'transform'	-ize, -ify	mechanize jīxiè- | huà machine | beautify měi- | huà beauty |
-de (the attributive marker)	-tic, -al	scientific kēxué- | de science | political zhèngzhì- | de politics |
-xìng 'nature'	-ity, -ness	possibility kěnéng- | xìng possible | seriousness yánzhòng- | xìng serious |
-lùn 'discourse'	-ism	idealism wéi | xīn- | lùn only | mind | -ism evolutionism jìnhuà- | lùn evolve | -ism
-zhǔyì 'doctrine'	-ism	communism gòng | chǎn- | zhǔyì share | property | doctrine imperialism dìguó- | zhǔyì imperialistic | doctrine state

Although these Chinese suffixes are similar to some derivations in English, they are only roughly comparable. The Chinese student should not equate any one derivational process with a suffix

in his native language. These comparative examples are useful only as aids for the Chinese student to gain an understanding of the derivations in English.

The total number of grammatical derivations in Chinese is not much greater than the number of suffixes listed above. It is obvious that a much greater number exists in English.

After some exposure to derived words in English, the foreign student will be able to make an intelligent guess at the meaning of a new derived word that he encounters. However, there are inconsistencies that will prove troublesome. For example, most words that end in -ly are adverbs. However, there are many adjectives that also bear the suffix -ly:

lovely, friendly, manly, unsightly, brotherly, costly

There are also -ly-words which are both adjectives and adverbs:

monthly, daily, nightly, yearly, likely

If the foreign student encounters troublesome words in the context of a sentence, he would be in a much better position to guess at the meaning of the word than he would be if a new word is simply thrusted at him. For this reason, it is much more effective to introduce new words, especially those produced by one of the many derivational processes in English, in the context of sentences.

The foreign student may also have trouble creating new words according to the derivational processes that he has learned. This is because the derivational processes in English are neither completely regular nor irregular. While there is enough of a pattern to encourage the foreign student to be productive, there is still enough irregularity to vex him continually:

agile - agility	pastor - pastoral
able - ability	doctor - doctoral
ample - *ampility	actor - *actoral

The more cautious and perhaps timid student will refrain from using derived words that he has never heard before. The more daring and creative student will attempt to produce words along the patterns that he has observed among the derived words he knows. There are advantages to both approaches. Perhaps a mixture of creativity with cautiousness would be a good middle course.

A final point that must be remarked upon here is that many derived words acquire meanings that cannot be inferred from the meaning of the original words. For historical reasons, derived words, as independent vocabulary items, often develop special connotations and nuances in meaning. Compare the meaning of the following derived words with that of their original words:

taste - tasteful The table was arranged in a tasteful way.
*Our dinner was tasteful tonight.

awful - awfully	Our drill instructor is awfully pretty.
human - humane	Human beings are not always humane.
child - childish	Although he is already a grown man, he is still very childish.

A foreign student must be exposed to such words individually in order to learn their true meanings. Those derived words in common usage which deviate from the meaning of their original words should be pointed out to the foreign student to prevent possible embarrassing mistakes.

2.13. Word Derivation Through Affixing.

2.13.1. A type of derivational process which is especially prolific in the English language is the formation of complex words through affixing. A few of the most common derivational affixes used to make new words are these:

Prefixes	Meaning	Examples
co-	together	coexistence
de-	away, down	deform
sub-	under	subterrainian
trans-	across	transgress
re-	again	recondition
semi-	half	semi-literate
un-,in-,ir-,im-	not	impolite
bi-	two	bilateral
uni-	one	unilateral
multi-	many	multimillionaire
pre-	before	preregister
anti-	against	antisocial
counter-	against	counterrevolutionary

Suffixes:	Meaning	Examples
-able,-ible,	able	definable
-er,-or	agent	actor, lawnmower
-ful	full of	cupful
-like	to resemble	childlike
-ist	proponent,expert	scientist, communist
-less	without	endless

The above list is far from complete, but it does give a sampling of the suffixes and prefixes in English. There are not quite as many in Chinese as there are in English, but those that exist in Chinese will help the student understand how suffixes and prefixes work in English.

Chinese Prefix	Meaning	Examples	
kě-	-able,-ible	lovable	palatable
		kě- | ài	kě- | kǒu
		love	mouth

Chinese Prefixes	Meaning	Examples
zì-	auto-	automatic zì-|dòng move autobiography zì-|zhuàn biography
bù-	un-	unscientific bù-|kēxué science irregular bù-|gūize regulation
dān-	uni-	unilateral dān-|fāngmiàn aspect
duō-	poly-,multi-	polysyllabic duō-|yīnjié syllabic
wěi-	pseudo-	pseudo-government (puppet government) wěi-|zhèngfu government
fēi-	non-	nonphysical fēi-|wùzhí material| de
chīn-	pro-	pro-American chīn-|měi America

Chinese Suffixes	Meaning	Examples
-zhě	-er,-or	compiler biān compile|-zhě
-yuán	-er,-or	teacher jiào teach|-yuán
-jiā	-ist	scientist kēxué science|-jiā

Derivation through affixing has become more prolific in Chinese in recent years, perhaps due to influence from European languages. But there are still not nearly as many prefixes and suffixes in Chinese as there are in English.

Just as the words of one class derived from those of another class through grammatical derivations, complex words of the pres-

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ent type have inconsistencies and irregularities that will prove troublesome to the foreign student. But the Chinese student should realize from the usage of prefixes and suffixes in his native language that this method of derivation is not totally productive; that is, one cannot produce new words along observed patterns at will:

We have: activism - activist
socialism - socialist
individualism - individualist

but: conservatism - *conservatist

We have: activism - activist - activize
monopolism - monopolist - monopolize

but: racism - racist - *racize

notice in: organism-organist-organize there isn't the same relationship as there is among other words that follow this pattern of derivation.

The general meaning of the affixes in English will help the foreign student learn the meaning of new lexical items containing these suffixes. But he cannot assume that he can create words using the affixes he knows. Extensive exposure to the English language will uncover for the foreign student more and more inconsistencies to the general patterns, and he will eventually gain a feel for what is a derived word and what is an odd-sounding non-word.

Another type of error that a foreign student may make is the misidentification of affixes. Sometimes, what seems to be an affix in a word would simply be a part of the basic word. Thus, refuse does not mean to fuse again, redress does not mean to dress again, and interview does not mean to view between. The instructor should point out words in common usage that may lead to this kind of error.

2.13.2. One of the problems that foreign students have with affixes and grammatical derivations in English is that certain derivational morphemes have different, but similar forms. Some derivational morphemes have more than one form:

un- in- ir- il- im-	unfriendly, unreasonable, unfinished inhospitable, inaccurate, infrequent irreligious, irregular, irrevocable illegal, illegible, illegitimate impolite, impossible, immovable
able- ible-	comfortable, drinkable, definable edible, sensible, divisible
-ent -ant	emergent, clement, dependent clairvoyant, reluctant, pleasant

It is difficult even for the native speaker to learn which form of a derivational morpheme is used in which words. It may be even more difficult for the foreign student to match the correct forms with particular words. The foreign student will have only his memory to rely on in learning the correct forms. It may be helpful if he learns from the very beginning all the possible forms for the various derivational morphemes.

All the derivational morphemes given in the above examples, with the exception of the first one, have different forms only in the spelling. For the student who only wishes to learn to speak English, this would not pose too great a problem. The prefix un- in- ir- il- im- is the one that would cause trouble to all students. Only extensive exposure to forms using this prefix will allow the student to overcome this problem.

2.14. Stress in Derived Words.

2.14.1. Stress shift and/or vowel shift may accompany addition of derivation morphemes:

stress shift:

médicàte	- mèdicátion
éducàte	- èducátion
sólid	- sòlídity
active	- àctívity
féminine	- fèmininity

vowel shift with or without accompanying stress shift:

/ə-ɑ/	pérson	- pèrsónify
/ɑy-I/	ásinìne	- àsinínity
/i-ɛ/	sèréne	- sèrénity
/e-æ/	pròfáne	- pròfánity
/o-ɑ/	vèrbóse	- vèrbósity
/ə-ɑ/	cúrious	- cùriósity

In English, many words are derived from more basic words by having derivational morphemes appended to them. Foreign students in general have trouble placing stress on the correct syllables in English. This trouble is compounded when a derivational morpheme causes a shift in the stress. The foreign student may be accustomed to a certain stress pattern in a certain word. When he adds a derivational morpheme to it, he may still use the original stress pattern. Related to this problem is the shift in the vowel when a derivational morpheme is added to a word. The foreign student has the tendency to neglect vowel shifts. Practice with pairs of original and derived words will help the foreign student to learn the stress and vowel shifts. He should learn to perform the stress and vowel shifts so automatically that he can apply them to the derived words in his new vocabulary items.

2.14.2. Words that belong to two classes may have varying readings. There is a group of words in English that can function both as nouns and as verbs, but have two pronunciations depending on which way they are used:

project	progress
produce	reject
object	contract
subject	import
record	combat
rebound	protest

When used as nouns, these words are stressed on the first syllable. As verbs, their stress is on the second syllable.

The foreign student has difficulty in placing stress on the correct syllables of words in general. In learning the stress on these particular words, the instructor must point out the shift in stress with the change in the function of the word in a sentence. In Chinese, there are also certain words that can function both as verbs and as nouns. However, there is no comparable shift in stress when the function of the word is changed. In order to internalize the stress shift in these words, the Chinese student should practice with pairs of sentences like the following:

We have made much progress this week.
We have progressed quite a bit this week.

Please bring your record when you come for your appointment.
Your latest achievements will be recorded.

2.15. Diminutive Forms.

In English, some nouns have diminutive forms:

goose - gosling
book - booklet
cigar - cigarette
lamb - lambkin
dog - puppy
cat - kitten
cow - calf
duck - duckling
stream - streamlet
circle - circlet

In Chinese also some nouns have diminutive counterparts, formed by a diminutive suffix appended to the original nouns. For some other nouns, the smallness is expressed only by having the adjective xiǎo 'small' added before the noun. There are more diminutive nouns in Chinese then there are in English. In both languages, there are no hard and fast rules about how diminutive forms are derived from the regular forms. Sometimes, the derivational process is no longer productive and the original word has fallen from common usage while the derived word has lost its diminutive meaning. Examples are the words pamphlet and hamlet. In order to learn the diminutive forms in English, it would be best for the Chinese student to memorize the forms as separate lexical items. It may be helpful if the diminutive forms are in-

troduced at the same time their regular counterparts are introduced, so that the student will realize what nouns have diminutive forms from the very beginning. For instance, if a foreign student learns cat before he learns kitten, he may develop the habit of referring to both cats and kittens as cats and may have trouble correcting the habit when he finally learns the word kitten. On the other hand, if he learns them both at the beginning, he will distinguish between them.

2.16. Ordinal Numbers.

The formation of ordinal numbers is more varied in English than in Chinese. In Chinese, ordinal numbers are formed simply by adding the prefix dì- before the corresponding cardinal numbers. In English, the correspondence between ordinal and cardinal numbers is as follows:

Cardinal number	Ordinal number
X + one	X + first
X + two	X + second
X + three	X + third
X + Yty	X + Ytieth
All others	add -th to cardinal number

The Chinese student should not have too much trouble if he learns the above rules.

CHAPTER 3: SYNTAX: ENGLISH AND CHINESE SENTENCE PATTERNS

3.0. The Sentence: Introduction.

In this manual, the discussion of syntax is divided into three different parts: the sentence, the verb phrase, and the noun phrase. However, not every difference between the structure of Chinese and that of English, nor every difficulty that a Chinese student may have in learning English, can be neatly assigned to one of these parts. There is much overlapping among them. For example, in English we add the dummy auxiliary do/did in front of the verb when the sentence is either a question or in the negative. There is no corresponding auxiliary in Chinese and the Chinese student may have difficulty in learning to insert this auxiliary in English sentences where it is necessary. This can be considered a point for comparison in the overall sentence structure. On the other hand, it is a process that is applied to the verb phrase, and therefore can be appropriately discussed in the verb phrase section. In order to avoid repetition, problems that may overlap two or three parts will be discussed in the part that comes first in the text. For example, the above problem with do/did will be discussed in the sentence rather than the verb phrase section. It is hoped that the reader will use the index to locate the overlapping problems that cannot be assigned to any one particular section.

In every language, grammaticalness is a quality that cannot be precisely defined. In English as well as Chinese, there are sentences that are neither strictly correct or incorrect. For example, we can understand the sentence I swept clean the floor, although it sounds a little odd. We know that we would normally say I swept the floor clean, but we cannot say exactly why the other sentence is incorrect. When we cannot explain why a sentence is incorrect, we may wonder whether it is incorrect at all. Chinese speakers learning English as a second language will often say things that border between the correct and incorrect, or things that are not incorrect, but awkward, in English. In this manual, the errors as well as the awkward constructions that Chinese speakers are likely to utter will be pointed out. It is hoped that the teacher will become more attuned to the difficulties of the Chinese student and more able to teach him to speak English not only more correctly, but also more smoothly and fluently.

There are many points of contrast between the overall sentence structure of Chinese and that of English. These contrasting points that may cause difficulty for the Chinese speaker will be discussed one by one in this unit. The table beginning on the next page shows the points that will be discussed.

3.1. Subject-Predicate Relationship.

The relationship between the subject and predicate is loose in Chinese sentences. In English sentences, we can usually discern a subject and a predicate. The one principal exception is in imperatives, where the subject is 'understood' and is therefore deleted. In all other sentences, there is usually a definable relationship between the subject and the predicate. In Chi-

Table 7

Sentence Structure in English and Chinese

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Subject and Predicate	subject present in English sentences other than imperatives	subject often deleted	3.1.
Position of direct object	normally after the verb	often before the verb	3.2.1.
Here and there	often in initial position in sentences	rarely in initial position	3.2.2.
Position of time adverb	sentence initial position or after the verb	always before the verb	3.3.1.
Position of place adverbs	most frequently after the verb, sometimes in sentence initial position	most frequently immediately before the verb, sometimes in initial position	3.3.2.
Position of Conditional Clause	either before or after main clause	usually before the main clause	3.4.1.
Time clause	can be logically the main clause	never the logically main clause	3.4.2.
Position of because clause	either before or after the main clause	normally before main clause	3.4.3.
Conjunction	important in English sentences	often deleted	3.4.4.
Conjoined noun phrase or verb ph. in series	syntactic patterns in English and Chinese are different		3.5.1.
Conjoined verbal nominals	must be in the same form	are naturally in the same forms as diverse forms do not exist in Chinese	3.5.2.

Table 7(cont.)

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Deletion of identical verb in a sentence	preferred in English	never in Chinese	3.6.
Relative position of subject and auxiliary verb in questions	reversed from that in statements	same as that in statements	3.7.2.
Position of wh-words in questions	always in initial position	position variable	3.7.2.
Answer to yes-no questions	usually begins with yes or no	need not begin with yes or no	3.7.3.
Length of answer to yes-no question	longer in Chinese than in English		3.7.4.
Answers to negatively phrased questions	Chinese conception opposite from that in English		3.7.5.
Question tags	much more complicated in English than in Chinese		3.7.6.
Position of negative particles	after auxiliary verb	before entire verb phrase	3.8.1.
Auxiliary do/did	necessary in questions and negative sentences	does not exist in Chinese	3.7.2. 3.8.2.
Two-word verbs	many two-word verbs in English correspond to one-word verbs in Chinese		3.9. 3.22.
Position of indirect object	more variable in Chinese than in English		3.10.1.

Table 7(cont.)

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
It and them as direct objects	certain restrictions	no restrictions	3.10.2.
Adjectival and adverbial object complements	both exist	do not exist	3.11.
The formal passive construction	usage is broader in English than in Chinese		3.12.1.
Active vs. passive sentences	always distinguished	may not be distinguished	3.12.2.
Position of agent in passive sentences	follows the verb	precedes the verb	3.12.3.
Purposive infinitive	exists in English	expressed by different syntactic structure	3.13.1.
Gerund and infinitive	distinction between them necessary	there are no grounds upon which to make distinction between them	3.13.2. 4.14.5.
Nominal object complement and adjectival complement	some differences between Chinese and English		3.14.1.
Clauses contracted into noun phrases	often in English	rare in Chinese	3.14.2. 3.14.3. 3.14.4.
Verb phrase + complement of obligation	a construction in English that has no correspondence in Chinese		3.15.

Table 7(cont.)

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Sentences with the auxiliary verb may	may take on a syntactic construction in Chinese radically different from in English		3.16
Empty subjects	often used	never used	3.17.
Want and would like	difference in degree of politeness reflected in English, but less so in Chinese		3.18.
Expressions of preference	syntactic construction in Chinese is radically different from that in English		3.19.
More and less	these words do not exist in Chinese; these concepts are expressed through syntactic constructions		3.20.
Emphatic stress	not always on the same elements in Chinese as in English		3.21.
Prepositions and clause introducers	very important part of sentences	often deleted	3.22.

nese, this relationship is more elusive.

Many sentences in spoken Chinese lack a subject. This is because in actual conversation, the subject is understood, and the Chinese speaker does not feel the necessity to state it. In some Chinese sentences which lack a subject, there is really no particular nameable subject. In the English sentences which correspond to this type of Chinese sentence, a dummy subject is usually added.

Deletion of subject in Chinese because it is understood:

How are you?		I'm leaving.	
hǎo	ma	zǒu	le
good	(interrogative particle)	leave	(perfect marker)

Do you like to go to the movies?					Yes, I do.
nǐ	xǐhuan	kàn	diànyǐng	ma	xǐhuan
you	like	see	movie	(interrogative particle)	like

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Deletion of subject in Chinese because there is no particular nameable subject:

It is raining.		You can't see it from here				
xià	yǔ	cóng	zhèr	kàn	bú	jiàn
descend	rain	from	here	look	not	see

(In the second sentence, you refers to people in general.)

As place words and time words almost always precede the verb in Chinese (See section 3.3.), they appear to be the topic of the sentence when no subject is present. Examples:

One cannot swim here. (As for this place, one cannot swim.)			
zhèr	bù	néng	yóuyǒng
here	not	can	swim

One does not go to work on Sunday. (As for Sunday, one does not go to work.)		
xīngqítiān	bú	shàngbān
Sunday	not	go to work

The Chinese student may erroneously utter sentences like:

*Go now. (Meaning I'm going now.)
*Here can't swim.
*Sunday no work.
*Raining.

The Chinese student must stop thinking that it is too redundant to state an understood subject in an English sentence, except when the sentence is an imperative. He must also learn to add dummy subjects to English sentences in which there are no particular subjects

3.2. Position of Elements in the Predicate.

3.2.1. In Chinese, the direct object is often placed in initial position in a sentence.

In English, the normal position for the direct object is after the verb:

I'd like to borrow the book you bought yesterday.
I have not seen him today.
We fed all the monkeys in the zoo.

In English, the direct object is placed in initial position only in special situations:

1) When the speaker wishes to emphasize it in order to contrast it with something else:

Money I have, but not happiness.

2) When the speaker begins a sentence before he has formulated it completely in his mind, the result is a substandard

type of English, something that is not usually found in deliberate speech:

The book you bought yesterday, I'd like to borrow it.
The monkeys in the zoo, we fed them all.

Although these sentences are intelligible, they are not considered to be representative of a standard sentence pattern in English.

3) Unusual sentences that occur commonly in English:

Him I have not seen.

Sentences like this border on the idiomatic in that this pattern is not productive in English.

In Chinese, the direct object is commonly placed in initial position in a sentence:

I'd like to borrow the book you bought yesterday.

nǐ	zuótian	mǎi	de	nèi	běn	shū	wǒ	xiǎng
you	yesterday	buy		that	(classifier)	book	I	wish

jiè	yíxià
borrow	a while

We fed all the monkeys in the zoo.

dòngwuyuán-	lǐ	de	hóuzi	wǒmen	dōu	wèi	le
zoo	inside		monkey	we	all	feed	(perfect marker)

The above pattern is commonly used in Chinese to call attention to the direct object. The Chinese student may apply the same pattern to English, producing sentences like:

*The book you bought yesterday I would like to borrow.
*The dishes I have not washed yet.

Unless the 'object first' construction is used correctly in English, it will produce either an impression of stylistic strangeness or grammatically incorrect sentences. The beginning Chinese student would do best to avoid using the object first construction in English altogether. Only those who have achieved a native speaker's feel for the language will know when the object first construction may be used correctly in English.

3.2.2. A special construction with the predicate inverted exists in English. When the predicate consists of a copula + here or there, the predicate is usually inverted:

Here's my house.
There's the movie theater.
Here it is.
There it is.

In Chinese, this kind of inversion is unusual:

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Here's my house.

wǒ	de	jiā	zài	zhèr	or	zhèr	shi	wǒ	de	jiā	(less common)
I		home	at	here		here	is	I		home	

There's the theater.

xìyuàn	zài	nèr	or	nèr	shi	xìyuàn
theater	at	here		there	is	theater

Here it is.

zài	zhèr	(the only form used)
at	here	

Where's your house? Here it is.

ni	jiā	zài	nǎr	(jiù)	zài	zhèr
you	home	at	where	just	at	here

There it is.

zài	nèr	(the only form used)
at	there	

Where's the theater? There it is.

xìyuàn	zài	nǎr	(jiù)	zài	nèr
theater	at	where	just	at	there

The Chinese student is likely to say:

My house is here.
The theater is there.
It is here.
It is there.

Although the above sentences are not grammatically wrong, they do not give the same force as sentences like:

Here's my house.
There's the theater.
Here it is.
There it is.

An additional rule that the Chinese student must learn with the usage of here and there in sentence initial position is that the subject of the sentence must precede the verb when it is a pronoun, but must follow the verb when it is a noun. Compare:

Here is Algernon.	*Here Algernon is.
Here he is.	*Here is he.
There is the theater.	*There the theater is.
There it is.	*There is it.

The Chinese student must learn to use here and there in initial position in English sentences. Exposure to actual sentences with this pattern will help him absorb this pattern.

3.3. Time and Place Adverbs.

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3.3.1. Time words occur either immediately preceding the verb or in sentence initial position in Chinese. In English, time words most frequently occur at the end of a sentence. They can occur also in sentence initial position:

Tomorrow I will go shopping.
I will go shopping tomorrow.
The team goes to Chicago every year.
Every year, the team goes to Chicago.

In Chinese, the most common position for time words is immediately preceding the verb. This seems logical because time words most often modify the verb. An alternate position for time words is in sentence initial position, but this is not as common:

wǒ	míngtian	qù	mǎi	dōngxi
I	tomorrow	go	buy	things

míngtian	wǒ	qù	mǎi	dōngxi
tomorrow	I	go	buy	things

qiúduì	měi	nián	dōu	qù	zhījiāgē
ball team	each	year	always	go	Chicago

měi	nián	qiúduì	dōu	qù	zhījiāgē
each	year	ball team	always	go	Chicago

The Chinese student needs to pay special attention to this problem lest he utter such malformed sentences as:

*I tomorrow will go shopping.
*The ball team every year goes to Chicago.

3.3.2. Place words usually occur immediately before the verb in Chinese. In English, place words occur most frequently after the verb. Sometimes, they can also occur in sentence initial position:

I don't like to study in the library.
In the theater you are not allowed to smoke.
You are not allowed to smoke in the theater.

In Chinese, place words occur most frequently immediately before the verb. Sometimes, place words may also occur in sentence initial position; this alternate position is allowed in cases where the place word modifies the entire sentence. In such cases, the corresponding English sentence also permits the place word to be alternately placed in sentence initial position:

wǒ	bù	xǐhuan	zài	túshūguǎn	niànshū
I	not	like	at	library	study

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You are not allowed to smoke in the theater.

bù	néng	zài	diànyǐngyuàn	lǐ	chōuyān
not	can	at	movie theater	inside	smoke

In the theater, you are not allowed to smoke.

zai	diànyǐngyuàn	lǐ	bù	néng	chōuyān
at	movie theater	inside	not	can	smoke

The Chinese student needs to pay special attention to the position of place words in English sentences lest he utter such malformed sentences as:

*I don't like in library study.
*You should not in class read comics.

3.4. Compound and Complex Sentences.

3.4.1. A conditional clause always precedes the main clause in Chinese. In English, the two following clause orders are permissible:

If you don't like this, you don't have to eat it.
You don't have to eat it if you don't like it.

When the weather is good, I take the children to the park.
I take the children to the park when the weather is good.

In Chinese, the conditional clause must precede the main clause. The conditional clause may follow the main clause only when it is added as an afterthought. Such cases are considered unusual. These are examples of the usual order:

You don't have to eat it if you don't like it.

yàoshi	nǐ	bù	xǐhuan	nǐ	bú	yòng	chī
if	you	not	like	you	not	need	eat

I take the children to the park when the weather is good.

tiānqi	hǎo	de	shíhou	wǒ	dài	háizimen	dào	gōngyúan	qù
weather	good		time	I	bring	children	arrive	park	go

He may watch TV after he finishes his homework.

tā	zuò-	wán	gōngkè	yǐhòu	kéyi	kàn	diànshì
he	do	finish	homework	after	may	watch	TV

You can't have a snack before dinner.

chī	fàn	yǐqián	bù	néng	chī	diǎnxīn
eat	dinner	before	not	can	eat	snack

The Chinese student is more likely to place the conditional clause before the main clause when speaking English, but he must learn that the reverse order is just as common in English

3.4.2. In English, a time clause can be logically the main clause. There are two types of sentences that contain a time

clause. The more common type is the one in which the time clause is adverbial and therefore subsidiary. In this type of sentence, the time clause may either precede or follow the main clause. Furthermore, the logical time of the time clause either precedes or is simultaneous to the time of the main clause:

When the weather is good I take the children to the park.

tiānqi	hǎo	de	shíhou	wǒ	dài	háizimen	dào	gōngyuán	qu		
weather	good		time	I	take	children	arrive	park	go		

Write me a letter when you arrive.

nǐ	dào	le	de	shíhou	xiě	yì	fēng	xìn	gěi	wǒ	
you	arrive	(perfect marker)		time	write	one	(classifier)	letter	to	I	

A less common, but nonetheless acceptable, type of sentence in English is one in which the time clause is logically the main clause. In this type of sentence, the time clause is invariably the second clause in the sentence. The logical time of the time clause follows that of the main clause. Moreover, the logical weight of the sentence is shifted to the second clause, although structurally, the first clause is the main one; in other words, what is logically the main clause has become structurally the subsidiary clause. Such sentences cannot be translated directly into Chinese. In the Chinese equivalents of such sentences, the logically main clause is structurally also the main clause:

I had been studying English only a short time when I was sent to the U.S.

wǒ	niàn	yīngyǔ	méi	niàn	duō	jiǔ	jiù	pài	dao	měiguo	
I	study	English	not	study	much	long	then	sent	arrive	U.S.	

lái	le
come	(perfect marker)

They had been playing tennis for only a few minutes before they lost the ball.

tāmen	dǎ	wǎngqiú	cái	dǎ	le		jǐ				
they	play	tennis	only	play	(perfect marker)		several				
fēnzhōng	jiù	bǎ		qiú	diū	le					
minutes	then	(object marker)		ball	lose	(perfect marker)					

Notice that in the Chinese sentences, the words when and before are deleted. To the Chinese student, it seems illogical to introduce the logically main clause with time words like when and before and to make the logically main clause structurally subsidiary. This is not done in Chinese. The instructor must impress upon the Chinese student that this type of construction is perfectly permissible in English and that he must master this construction in order to speak fluently.

3.4.3. In English, the subordinate clause introduced by because may occur either before or after the main clause. In Chi-

nese, however, the subordinate clause generally occurs before the main clause:

He is not coming because he has a cold.
or Because he has a cold he is not coming. (less common)

tā	yīnwei	shāng	le	fēng	suóyi	bù	lái	le
he	because	caught	a	cold	therefore	not	come	(perfect marker)

There is a construction in Chinese in which the reason may come after the outcome, but this is a less common construction and involves a redundancy:

Some foreigners cannot speak Chinese because they have never studied it properly.

yǒu	xiē	wàiguorén	bú	huì	shuō	zhōngguohuà
there are	some	foreigners	not	can	speak	Chinese

shì	yīnwei	tāmen	cónglái	méi	hǎohaor	de	xué
(copula)	because	they	ever	not	properly		learn

guò	de	yuángù
(experiential marker)		reason

Because the Chinese student is in the habit of placing the reason clause before the outcome clause, he may apply this same order to English. This is fine, but he must also learn that the reverse order is at least as common as the 'reason clause first' order.

3.4.4. Conjunctions.

Chinese speakers tend to delete conjunctions in compound or complex sentences. In English, the clauses in a compound or complex sentence are almost always connected by conjunctions such as and, but, if...then, etc. In Chinese, these conjunctions are often missing. Chinese speakers supply them mentally from the general sense of the connected clauses. In speaking English, they have the tendency to carry over this Chinese habit:

I eat vegetables, but not meat.

wǒ	chī	cài	bù	chī	ròu	
I	eat	vegetables	not	eat	meat	

I went to town and bought several chickens.

wǒ	dào	chéng	lǐ	gu	mǎi	le	jǐ	zhī	jī	
I	arrive	town	inside	go	buy	(perfect marker)	sev-eral	class-ifier	chicken	

If he doesn't go, I won't go either.

tā	bú	qù	wǒ	yě	bu	qù
he	not	go	I	also	not	go

Generally, if the semantic content of a conjunction word is small, there is a greater tendency to delete it in Chinese than in English. For this reason, and is almost always deleted between two clauses in Chinese. The Chinese student must learn that conjunctions are an important part of English sentences and should not be deleted.

3.5. Conjoined Noun Phrases and Verb Phrases.

3.5.1. In English, the pattern for conjoined noun phrases or verb phrases is A, B, ...and N. In Chinese, the pattern is different:

I bought some pencils, paper, and books.

wǒ	mǎi	le	xiē	qiānbi	zhǐ	gēn	shū
I	buy	(perfect marker)	some	pencil	paper	and	book

or

qiānbi	zhǐ	shū	wǒ	dōu	mǎi	le
pencil	paper	book	I	all	buy	(perfect marker)

He can swim, ride horses, and parachute.

tā	huì	yóuyǒng	qí	mǎ	gēn	tiàosǎn
he	can	swim	ride	horse	and	parachute

or

yóuyǒng	qí	mǎ	tiàosǎn	tā	dōu	huì
swim	ride	horse	parachute	he	all	can

In Chinese the pattern exemplified by the second translation in each of the above examples is at least as common as the first. The Chinese student may erroneously apply this pattern to English:

*Pencils, paper, books, I bought them.
*Ride horses, swim, parachute, he can do.

The Chinese student must remember that the normal pattern in English is the one in which the verb or noun phrases are not preposed in the sentence.

3.5.2. Conjoined verbal nominals must be in the same form. In English, the infinitive and the gerund of the verb can function as nominals. In conjoining this type of nominals, either the infinitive or the gerund form must be used throughout:

I like swimming, horseback riding, and parachuting.
I like to swim, to ride horses, and to parachute.

but not:

*I like to swim, to ride horses, and parachuting.

Since the simple form of the verb in Chinese serves the functions fulfilled by several different forms in English, including the infinitive and the gerund, it may be difficult for the Chinese student to distinguish the simple, infinitival, and gerundal forms of the verb in English. (See sections 4.9 and 4.10.) In enumerating a series of items, he may utter malformed sentences like the third example above. Therefore, it is necessary to impress upon the Chinese student the importance of using the same form of the verb throughout a series of conjoined verbal nominals.

3.6. Verb Deletion.

3.6.1. The deletion of an identical verb in a contrastive clause may occur in English, but not in Chinese. In English, the pattern of the two following sentences is the same on the surface:

I eat vegetables, but not meat.
I saw that movie, but not my mother.

In the deep structure, these two sentences are different. In the first sentence, meat is the object of eat, which is deleted on the surface. In the second sentence, my mother is the subject of see, which is deleted. The possibility of these two different underlying forms having the same surface structure may lead to ambiguity at times:

I saw Sam, but not Janet.

We can't be sure out of context whether it is Janet didn't see Sam, or I didn't see Janet. In Chinese, the verb in the contrastive sentence is not deleted. Therefore, there is no ambiguity in the surface structure:

I saw Sam, but not Janet. (I didn't see Janet.)

wǒ	jiàndao	Sam	kěshi	méi	jiàndao	Janet
I	saw	Sam	but	not	saw	Janet

I saw Sam, but not Janet. (Janet didn't see Sam.)

wǒ	jiàndao	Sam	kěshi	Janet	méi	jiàndao	tā
I	saw	Sam	but	Janet	not	saw	him

I eat vegetables, but not meat.

wǒ	chī	cài	bù	chī	ròu
I	eat	vegetables	not	eat	meat

I saw that movie, but not my mother.

wǒ	kàn	le	nèi	bù	diànyǐng	kěshi	wǒ	mǔqin	méi	kàn
I	see	(perfect marker)	that	(classifier)	movie	but	I	mother	not	see

The possibility of this type of ambiguity in English may confuse the foreign student, especially since there is no comparable ambiguity in his native language. The problem may be clarified for the foreign student when it is pointed out to him that the identical surface structure may represent two underlying sentences, in the manner shown above.

3.6.2. In English, we have conjoined verbs consisting of the positive and negative form of the same verb:

Are you coming or not (coming)?
I don't know whether he is coming or not (coming).

In Chinese, the form for this kind of conjoined verb is Verb + bu + Verb. The form Verb + haishi bu + Verb also occurs, but is rarer than the first form:

Are you coming or not?				Are you coming or not?				
nǐ	lái	bù	lái	nǐ	lái	háishi	bù	lái
you	come	not	come	you	come	or else	not	come

I don't know if he is coming or not.						
wǒ	bù	xiǎode	tā	lái	bù	lái
I	not	know	he	come	not	come

I don't know if he is coming or not.							
wǒ	bù	xiǎode	tā	lái	háishi	bù	lái
I	not	know	he	come	or else	not	come

The Chinese student may have the tendency not to delete the main verb in the second verb phrase, in conformity with the pattern in his native language. He may say:

Are you coming or not coming?
I don't know whether he is coming or not coming.

more often than he would say:

Are you coming or not?
I don't know whether he is coming or not.

It should be pointed out to the Chinese student that the pattern exemplified by the second set of sentences is more common in English.

3.7. Questions.

3.7.1. Question Word Order.

In yes-no questions, the position of the subject and auxiliary verb is reversed. Questions that require a yes or no answer in English begin with an auxiliary verb (the term auxiliary verb as is used here applies to the copula also):

Is this the highest mountain in the world?
Have you seen the latest movie on China?
Did he visit Shanghai when he was in China?

In Chinese, the order of the subject and the verb in yes-no questions remains essentially the same as that in statements:

Today is Monday.				
jīntian	shì	xīngqi	yī	
today	(copula)	day of week	one	

Is today Monday?						
jīntian	shi	bú	shì	xīngqi	yī	
today	(copula)	not	(copula)	day of week	one	

or jīntian | shì | xīngqi | yī | ma
today | (copula) | day of week | one | (interrogative particle)

She is not coming.
tā | bù | lái
she | not | come

Isn't she coming?
tā | bù | lái | ma
she | not | come | (interrogative particle)

My mother saw that movie.
wǒ | mǔqin | kàn | le | nèi | bù | diànyǐng
I | mother | see | (perfect marker | that | (classifier) | movie

Did my mother see that movie?
wǒ | mǔqin | yǒu | méi | yǒu | kàn | nèi | bù | diànyǐng
I | mother | have | not | have | see | that | (classifier) | movie

Since there is no reversal of the usual subject-verb order to form questions in Chinese, the Chinese student may erroneously say:

*Today is Monday?
*She isn't coming?
*My mother saw that movie?

The Chinese student must distinguish the auxiliary verb from the main verb and learn to reposition the auxiliary verb in questions in English.

In the sentence: My mother saw the movie, there is no auxiliary verb. But when this sentence is negated or turned into a question, the auxiliary did must be added. The addition of the dummy auxiliary did is a further problem to which the Chinese student must give extra attention.

3.7.2. In questions that require a more expanded answer than a simple yes or no, there is usually a wh-word. This wh-word is in initial position. As in yes-no questions, the auxiliary verb (including the dummy do/did) precedes the subject. In Chinese, this type of question has the same word-order as positive statements, with the exception that a question-word (comparable to wh-words in English) replaces the unknown in the question. A few examples will make this clear:

I can swim here.
wǒ | kěyi | zài | zhèr | yóuyǒng
I | can | at | here | swim

Where can I swim?
wǒ | kěyi | zài | nǎr | yóuyǒng
I | can | at | where | swim

This is Mr. Wang.
zhè | shì | Wáng | xiānsheng
this | is | Wang | Mr.

Who is this?
zhè | shì | shéi
this | is | who

I do it this way.
wǒ | zhèmme | zuò
I | this | do

How do you do this?
nǐ | zěmme | zuò | zhèige
you | how | do | this

Notice that the word-order in the positive statements and the questions in Chinese is essentially the same. The Chinese student may forget to place the wh-word in initial position and to reverse the order of the auxiliary verb and the subject in English sentences. He may utter erroneous sentences like:

*I can swim where?
*Where I can swim?
*Who this is?
*You how do this?
*How you do this?

The three things that a Chinese student must keep in mind in order to avert this kind of error are:

1) Add the dummy auxiliary do/did where necessary.
2) Place wh-words in initial position in questions.
3) Reverse the order of the subject and the auxiliary verb in questions.

3.7.3. It is almost compulsory to begin an answer to a yes-no question with yes or no in English. In Chinese, however, an answer to a question which normally requires an answer that begins with yes or no in English does not necessarily need a yes or no:

Have you seen the latest movie on China?
nǐ | kàn | guò | nèi bù | zuì xīn | de
you | see | (experiential marker) | that (classifier) | most new |

guānyu | zhōngguó | de | diànyǐng | ma
concerning | China | | movie | (interrogative particle)

Yes, I have.
wǒ | kàn | guò | le
I | see | (experiential marker) | (perfect marker)

No, I haven't.
wǒ | méi | kàn | guò
I | not | see | (experiential marker)

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Thus a Chinese student may omit yes or no in answer to yes-no questions in English. The instructor must impress upon the Chinese student that it is important to begin an answer to a yes-no question with yes or no in English.

3.7.4. A brief answer to a yes-no question is preferred in English. The answer to the question: Is this the highest mountain in the world may be any one of the following:

Yes, this is the highest mountain in the world.
Yes, it is.
Yes.

Yes, it is is the most common answer. English speakers feel thay Yes is too brief, and the first answer is too verbose. In Chinese, there is a greater tendency to use a full answer, something closer to the first answer above. This tendency is more pronounced in sentences in which the main verb is not the copula:

Does Allen like to study?

Allen	xǐhuan	niànshū	ma
Allen	like	study	(interrogative particle)

Yes, he does.

tā	xǐhuan	(niànshū)
he	like	study

The Chinese student may use a form of the answer which most native speakers of English would consider too verbose. He must learn that the briefer answer is preferred in English.

3.7.5. Answers to Negatively Phrased Questions.

Negatively phrased questions pose some difficulties for the Chinese student. In English, the answer to a negatively phrased question usually begins with a yes or no:

Can't he swim?	Isn't this our car?
Yes, he can.	Yes, it is.
No, he can't.	No, it isn't.

Notice that in the answers to such questions in English, the speaker says yes when he disagrees with the statement in the question, and no when he agrees with the statement in the question.

In Chinese, the speaker usually does not begin an answer to a negatively phrased question with a yes or no. He may begin the answer with part of the verb phrase, followed by a complete statement, or simply answer with a complete statement:

Can't he swim?

tā	bú	huì	yóuyǒng	ma
he	not	can	swim	(interrogative particle)

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Yes, he can.

(huì)	tā	huì	yóuyǒng	(with stress on the word huì)
can	he	can	swim	

No, he can't.

(bú	huì)	tā	bú	huì	yóuyǒng
not	can	he	not	can	swim

Less commonly, the Chinese speaker may say something comparable to yes or no in English:

Can't he swim?

tā	bú	huì	yóuyǒng	ma
he	not	can	swim	(interrogative particle)

Yes, he can.

bù	tā	huì	yóuyǒng
no	he	can	swim

No, he can't.

duì	tā	bú	huì	yóuyǒng
that's right	he	not	can	swim

Notice that in these answers, the Chinese speaker begins with bu 'no' where the English answer begins with yes, and dui 'that's right' where the English answer begins with no. When the Chinese speaker begins an answer to a negatively phrased question with something comparable to the yes or no in the English answer, he conceives in his mind either agreement or disagreement with the statement in the question. When speaking English, he is liable to say yes when he wishes to answer in agreement with the statement in question, and no when he wishes to answer in disagreement with the statement in question. This is the exact opposite from what the English speaker would say. The Chinese student must first of all learn to begin an answer to a negatively phrased question with a yes or no. Secondly, he must learn to begin the answer with yes when the rest of the answer is a positive statement, and no when the rest of the answer is a negative statement.

3.7.6. Questions With Tags.

Chinese speakers may have some trouble using questions with tags in English. In English, the so-called 'tag question' construction is used when a speaker is reasonably certain of the answer he will receive:

You have seen him today, haven't you?
The train won't arrive on time, will it?

where the expected answers are:

Yes, I have.
No, it won't.

The effect of the tag is comparable to the phrase n'est-ce pas in French. In Chinese, there is a special question particle which

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serves a similar function. The presence of this particle, ba, indicates that the speaker expects agreement with the statement contained in his question:

You have seen him today, haven't you?

nǐ	jīntian	jiàn	guo	tā	le	ba
you	today	see	(experiential marker)	him	(perfect marker)	(particle)

The train won't be on time, will it.

huǒchē	bú	huì	zhǔnshí	ba
train	not	will	on time	(particle)

As these examples illustrate, the tag in Chinese is simply ba, regardless of what precedes it. The tag in English is more complicated; its form is dependent upon the preceding statement. The positiveness or negativeness of tne tag in English is opposite to that of the preceding statement, and it is composed of the auxiliary verb plus the subject. Since the tag is much more complicated in English than in Chinese, the Chinese student will need extra practice in constructing this type of question in English.

3.8. Verb Negation.

3.8.1. In English, the negative particle occurs after the auxiliary. To negate a copula, the word not or its contraction n't is placed immediately after the copula. In all other verbals, the negative is placed directly after the auxiliary:

George is a student. George isn't a student.
George has studied. George hasn't studied.
George is studying. George isn't studying.

In Chinese, the negative particle is placed in front of the entire verb:

George isn't a student.

George	bú	shì	xuésheng
George	not	be	student

George hasn't studied yet.

George	hái	méi	niànshū
George	yet	not	study

George isn't studying.

George	méi	zài	niànshū
George	not	(progressive marker)	study

The Chinese student may erroneously say:

*George not (is) a student.
*George not has studied.
*George not studying.

He may avert this kind of error by simply remembering to place the negative particle after the auxiliary verb rather than before the entire verb phrase.

3.8.2. To negate a positive statement that contains no auxiliary verb in its verb phrase, the dummy auxiliary do/did is added:

George studies.	He came yesterday.
George | niànshū	tā | zuótian | lái | le
George | study	he | yesterday | come | (perfect marker)
George doesn't study.	He didn't come yesterday.
George | bú | niànshū	tā | zuótian | méi | lái
George | not | study	he | yesterday | not | come

There is no do/did in the affirmative sentences, so it doesn't seem logical to the Chinese student that there should be a do/did in the negative sentences. Moreover, as the Chinese sentences above indicate, there is nothing in the negative Chinese sentences corresponding to do/did in the negative English sentences. The Chinese student is apt to delete the do/did in negative English sentences, and utter such malformed sentences as:

*He not study.
*He not come (or came) yesterday.

The Chinese student must learn to add the dummy auxiliary do/did in negative sentences that do not have other auxiliary verbs.

3.9. Two-Word Verbs.

3.9.1. There are many transitive verbs in Chinese that are translated into English as intransitive verbs. Such verbs in Chinese can take direct objects, but their English counterparts cannot. An object can occur in such English sentences only after a preposition. There is no logic to this and it is therefore difficult for a foreigner to learn:

I object to this opinion.				
wǒ | fǎnduì | zhèi | ge (classifier)	yìjiàn			
I | object | this	opinion			
I insist on the best.				
wǒ | jiānyào | zuì | hǎo | de				
I | insist on | most | good				
Have you walked on that new road yet?				
nǐ | zǒu | guò (experiential marker)	nèi | tiáo (classifier)	xīn | lù	ma (interrogative particle)	
you | walk	that	new | road		

It seems illogical to the Chinese student that the verb support can take a direct object, while the verb object cannot. In Chinese, this opinion, the best, and the new road are direct objects of the three respective sentences above. It doesn't seem to make sense that they are not so in English. The Chinese stu-

dent may say things like:

*I object this opinion.
*I insist the best.
*Have you walked that new road yet?

Notice that in the correct English sentences, the prepositions that are added after the verb and before the object vary depending on the verb. The Chinese student must first of all learn which verbs in English are intrasitive. Secondly, he must memorize which prepositions occur after which intransitive verbs. It would be the easiest for him to simply memorize each verb + preposition as a single lexical item. (See section 3.22. for further discussion.)

3.9.2. We may call a verb and a preposition that often co-occur two-word verbs: bring in, call up, object to. In the case of some two-word verbs, if the object is a pronoun, the preposition must be separated from the verb:

Please bring in the umbrella.
Please bring the umbrella in. (less common)
Please bring it in.
not:*Please bring in it.

I called up my mother.
I called my mother up. (less common)
I called her up.
not:*I called up her.

In the case of some other two-word verbs, this is not true:

I object to your opinion.
I object to it.
not:*I object it to.

In Chinese, constituents of two-word verbs occur together whether or not the object is a pronoun:

I brought in the umbrella.

wǒ	bǎ	yǔsǎn	ná	jìn	lái	le
I	(object marker)	umbrella	bring	enter	come	(perfect marker)

I brought it in.

wǒ	bǎ	nèi	ge	ná	jìn	lái	le
I	(object marker)	that	(classifier)	bring	enter	come	(perfect markêr)

The Chinese student may erroneously place a two-word verb before a pronoun object even when the second part of the two-word verb (the preposition) should be placed after the pronoun object:

*I called up him.
*Please bring in it.

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The Chinese student must remember that the preposition must occur after the pronoun object with certain two-word verbs.

3.10. Direct and Indirect Objects.

3.10.1. Position of Indirect Object.

The position of the indirect object in English is different from that in Chinese. In English, the following pairs of sentences are synonymous:

1) I bought you a new dress.
2) I bought a new dress for you.

3) I wrote you a letter.
4) I wrote a letter to you.

The for and to in sentences 2) and 4) mark the indirect objects. In sentences 1) and 3), the indirect objects are not so marked; only their positions in the sentences signal that they are the indirect objects.

In Chinese, the word gěi corresponds to the indirect object markers for and to in English. Indirect objects in Chinese are almost always marked by the word gěi, regardless of the position of the indirect object.* The sentence I bought you a new dress or I bought a new dress for you may be rendered into Chinese in the three following ways:

wǒ	mǎi	gěi	nǐ	yí	jiàn	xīn	yīfu
I	buy	give	you	one	(classifier)	new	dress

wǒ	mǎi	le	yí	jiàn	xīn	yīfu	gěi	nǐ
I	buy	(perfect marker)	one	(classifier)	new	dress	give	you

wǒ	gěi	nǐ	mǎi	le	yí	jiàn	xīn	yīfu
I	give	you	buy	(perfect marker)	one	(classifier)	new	dress

Because the indirect object in Chinese almost always occurs with a marker, its order in the sentence is not too important. In English, when the indirect object occurs without a marker, it must precede the direct object. When the direct object occurs with a marker, it normally occurs after the direct object. Due to his habits in speaking Chinese, the Chinese student is liable to make two kinds of errors. The first is the insertion of a marker even where it is unnecessary in English:

* The principal exception to this rule is in sentences where the main verb is also gěi 'to give'. In this case, the indirect object normally occurs immediately after the main verb and is not marked by gěi; position itself marks it as the indirect object:

I give you a book.

wǒ	gěi	nǐ	yì	běn	shū
I	give	you	one	(classifier)	book

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I bought for you a new dress.
I wrote to you a letter.

Although these sentences are not grammatically wrong, they do not reflect a common pattern in English.

The second kind of error is the misplacing of the indirect object before the main verb, producing a pattern that parallels the third Chinese sentence above:

*I for you bought a new dress.
*I to you wrote a letter.

The Chinese student must remember that there are only two possible positions for the indirect object in English and that the indirect object is marked by the word for or to only when it follows the direct object.

3.10.2. There are two problems involving third person direct object pronouns.

In Chinese, direct objects which are third person pronouns referring to inanimate things are often omitted:

I don't want it.				He ordered them.			
wǒ	bú	yào		tā	dìng	le	
I	not	want		he	order	(perfect marker)	

In English, it is not permissible to omit the direct object pronoun. The Chinese student may have some trouble learning this.

A second problem is that in English, third person direct object pronouns cannot co-occur with an indirect object unless the indirect object follows the direct object and is introduced by a preposition marker:

He sent them to Mary. He ordered it for him.
*He sent Mary them. *He ordered him it.

There is no such restriction in Chinese:

He sent them to me.				
tā	jì	gěi	wǒ	le
he	send	give	I	(perfect marker)

He ordered it for me.				
tā	tì	wǒ	dìng	le
he	for	me	ordered	(perfect marker)

This restriction is not present in Chinese for two reasons:

1) Indirect objects almost always occur with a marker regardless of what the direct object is. (See section 3.10.1.)

2) Pronoun direct objects are often deleted anyway.

The Chinese student must learn that such a restriction exists in English.

3.11. Adjectival and Adverbial Object Complements.

3.11.1. The adjectival object complement in English has no equivalent in Chinese.

In English, a certain pattern is exemplified in the following sentences:

He takes his coffee black.
I like my steak rare.

These sentences are slightly different in meaning from:

He takes black coffee.
I like rare steak.

This difference can be reflected in Chinese translations:

He takes his coffee black.

tā	hē	kāfēi	yào	(hē)	hēi	de
he	drink	coffee	want	drink	black	

He takes black coffee.

tā	hē	hēi	kāfēi
he	drink	black	coffee

I like my steak rare.

wǒ	chī	niúpái	yào	(chī)	shēng	de
I	eat	steak	want	eat	rare	

I like rare steak.

wǒ	xǐhuan	shēng	niúpái
I	like	rare	steak

In the first set of English sentences, the adjective follows the modified noun. This never occurs in Chinese. As the Chinese sentences above illustrate, the Chinese equivalent for that pattern in English is actually a paraphrase and not a direct translation. This pattern is novel to the Chinese student and special attention is necessary for him to learn it.

3.11.2. English Construction With Adverbial Object Complement.

In English, there are the following pairs of synonymous sentences:

The teacher wants the students here.

jiàoyuán	yào	xuésheng	(liú)	zài	zhèli
teacher	want	students	remain	at	here

The boss wants you upstairs.

lǎobǎn	yào	nǐ	dào	lóushang	qu
boss	want	you	reach	upstairs	go

As the Chinese sentences indicate, the contracted English sen-

tences have no direct equivalents in Chinese. The pattern in Chinese is closer to the more expanded pattern in English. For this reason, the Chinese student is more likely to use the more expanded pattern when speaking English. But he must learn the contracted form in English in order to speak fluently. He may need to give additional attention to this form since there is nothing in his native language with which he can associate this.

3.12. Passive Sentences.

3.12.1. The use of the formal passive construction in Chinese is more restricted than in English. There are two types of passive sentence constructions in Chinese. One of them will be discussed in section 3.12.2. Here we will deal with the 'formal' passive construction, which makes use of a marker bèi, that will usually translate the by of the English passive sentence. However, this construction is usually restricted to sentences where adverse effect on the subject is implied. Example: He was brought up by his aunt cannot be translated into Chinese using this passive construction. But I was hit by a car can be. The passive construction in Chinese is:

subject + bèi (passive marker) (+ agent) + verb

I was hit by a car.

wǒ	bèi		chēzi	chuàng	le
I	(passive marker)		car	hit	(perfect marker)

He was brought up by his aunt.

tā	shi	tā	yímā	yǎng dà	de
he	(copula)	he	aunt	bring up	

Aside from learning to construct the passive sentence in English, the Chinese student must learn to apply it to sentences in which he would normally not use the passive in Chinese.

3.12.2. The second type of passive sentence in Chinese does not make use of the marker bèi. Its usage is not restricted to sentences where adverse effect on the subject is implied. The exact construction of this type of passive sentence takes on two different forms depending on whether the agent of the action is stated in the sentence. When the agent of the action is stated,

subject + shì (copula) + agent + verb + de

The book was written by Mr. Li.

nèi	běn	shū	shì	LǏ	xiānsheng	xiě	de
that	(classifier)	book	(copula)	Li	Mr.	write	

The dishes were washed by me.

wǎn	shì	wǒ	xǐ	de
dishes	(copula)	I	wash	

Notice that the English construction is quite different from its Chinese counterpart. The Chinese student is not likely to have much trouble learning this English construction because the comparable Chinese pattern is sufficiently different so as not to cause much interference. It is the passive construction in English in which the agent is deleted that causes more trouble for the Chinese student.

When the agent of the action is deleted, the passive construction in Chinese is identical to the active construction:

Mr. Li finished writing

Lǐ	xiānsheng	xiě	wán	le
Li	Mr.	write	finish	(perfect marker)

The book was finished.

shū	xiě	wán	le
book	write	finish	(perfect marker)

I washed the dishes.

wǒ	xǐ	le	wǎn	le
I	wash	(perfect marker)	dishes	

The dishes were washed.

wǎn	xǐ	le
dishes	wash	(perfect marker)

In the above examples of Chinese sentences, the verbs xiě 'write' and xǐ 'wash' function both actively and passively. This results in a lack of formal distinction between the active construction and the passive construction where the agent is deleted. The context alone is relied upon to make the meaning clear. Because of this lack of formal distinction in Chinese, the Chinese student may erroneously say sentences like:

*The dishes washed. *The dishes washed by me.
*The book finished. *The book finished by Mr. Li.

If the Chinese student pays special attention to this distinction in English which is lacking in his native language, he will be able to correct this type of error.

3.12.3. One major difference between passive sentences in Chinese and those in English is that the agent precedes the verb in Chineses while the verb precedes the agent in English:

The lion was killed by the hunter.

shīzi	bèi	liè-rén	shā	le
lion	by	hunter	kill	(perfect marker)

My house was burned by the troops

wǒ	de	fángzi	bèi	jūn-rén	shāo	le
I		house	by	troops	burn	(perfect marker)

The book was written by Mr. Li.

nèi	běn	shū	shì	Lǐ	xiānsheng	xiě	de
that	(classifier)	book	(copula)	Li	Mr.	write	

The dishes were washed by me.

wǎn	shì	wǒ	xǐ	de
dishes	(copula)	I	wash	

Because of the difference in sentence pattern, the Chinese student may say:

*The lion (was) by the hunter killed.
*My house was by the troops burnt.
*The book was by Mr. Li written.
*The dishes were by me washed.

These sentences sound a bit poetic, but they do not follow the normal English passive sentence pattern. The Chinese student must remember to place the agent after the verb in forming passive sentences in English.

3.13. Purposive Infinitive and Purposive Gerund.

3.13.1. Infinitive of Purpose.

In English, the infinitive of purpose is interchangeable with the phrase in order to... In Chinese, the corresponding word for both of these English expressions is lái (literally, come, but by extension means in order to):

This exercise is designed to help you.

zhèi	ge	liànxi	shì	shèjì	lái	bāngzhù	nǐ	de
this	(classifier)	exercise	is	design	in order to	help	you	

It was made to keep the water out.

nà	shì	zuò	lái	fáng	shuǐ	de
that	is	made	in order to	prevent	water	

In Chinese, a more formal pattern that occurs often in speech involves the term wèi...ér, which means something like for the sake of...:

This exercise is designed to help you.

zhèi	ge	liànxi	shì	wèi	le	bāngzhù	nǐ	ér	shèjì	de
this	(classifier)	exercise	is		(perfect marker)	help	you		design	

for sake of

It was made to keep the water out.

nà	shì	wèi	le	fáng	shuǐ	ér	zuò	de
that	is		(perfect marker)	prevent	water		made	
		for sake of						

Since there is no infinitival form of the verb in Chinese, it is difficult for the Chinese student to associate the infinitive of purpose with anything in his native language. He may associate in order to... with lái... in Chinese. Since wèi...ér defies any direct translation into everyday spoken English, the Chinese student is not likely to associate it directly with any expression of purpose in English. The Chinese student must learn that the infinitive in English may have a purposive meaning. It may help the student to learn this if he is told to equate it with in order to...

3.13.2. The purposive gerund and purposive infinitive can be used interchangeably at times, but not always. It is difficult for a Chinese student to know which to use where, and under what circumstances the two forms are interchangeable. The source of this difficulty is that the usage of these two forms is usually not adequately explained to the student. Indeed, it is difficult for the native English speaker to explain why he uses one form rather than the other in specific instances:

Infinitive and gerund interchangeable:

I bought some brushes to paint the house.
I bought some brushes for painting the house.
I brought my binoculars to view the sights.
I brought my binoculars for viewing the sights.

Infinitive must be used:

I hired a man to paint the house
*I hired a man for painting the house.
I closed the window to keep the rain out.
*I closed the window for keeping the rain out.

In the first group of sentences, the agent of the purposive act is the same as the agent subject of the main sentence. Hence, the infinitive as well as the gerund may be used. In the second group of sentences, the object of the main sentence is the agent of the purposive act (consequently the subject of the sentence is not the agent of the purposive act); therefore, the infinitive must be used. This is a useful distinction for explaining why the infinitive and the gerund may be used interchangeably at times, but not at other times. In Chinese, there is no formal distinction between the cases where the agent of the purposive act is the same as the agent of the main clause and those where the agent of the purposive act is the object of the main sentence. Hence, it is especially difficult for Chinese students to learn the formal distinction in English:

I brought my binoculars to view/for viewing the sights.

wǒ	dài	le	wàngyuǎnjìng	lái	kàn	fēngjǐng
I	bring	(perfect marker)	binoculars	in order to	view	scenery

I hired a man to paint my house.

wǒ	gù	le	ge	rén	lái	yóuqī	fángzi
I	hire	(perfect marker)	(classifier)	man	in order to	paint	house

The teacher should explain to the foreign student the logic behind why the purposive gerund and the purposive infinitive can be used interchangeably at times, but not always. The explanation can be in the manner done above. However, the native English speaker does not analyze his utterances grammatically every time before he speaks. In order that a foreign student learn to speak as spontaneously as the native speaker, he must be exposed to extensive examples of English sentences in which the above discussed distinction is exemplified. The beginning student can avoid misusing the purposive gerund by simply restricting himself to using the purposive infinitive, since this is always correct.

3.14. Contracted Clauses.

3.14.1. Nominal Object Complement.

The following pairs of English sentences are synonymous:

I considered him to be the most intelligent student.
I considered him the most intelligent student.

The voters elected him to be governor.
The voters elected him governor.

The mayor appointed him to be the police chief.
The mayor appointed him police chief.

In each of the pairs of sentences, the second sentence is the more common form and is an abbreviated version of the first, with the to be deleted. In Chinese there is no such abbreviated form; therefore, the second pattern is likely not to be used by the Chinese speaker:

The voters elected him governor.

rénmín	xuǎn	tā	zuò	zhōuzhǎng
people	elect	him	to be	governor

We chose him secretary.

wǒmen	xuǎn	le	tā	zuò	mìshū
we	elect	(perfect marker)	him	to be	secretary

I consider him the most intelligent student.

wǒ	rènwei	tā	shi	zuì	cōngmíng	de	xuésheng
I	consider	him	(copula)	most	intelligent		student

The Chinese student must learn that the contracted form, with to be deleted, is the preferred form in English.

In certain English sentences, to be is optional also before an adjectival complement:

The room seems (to be) very cold.

fángjiān	hǎoxiàng	hěn	lěng
room	seems	very	cold

As the Chinese glosses indicate, to be has no equivalent in the Chinese sentence. This is because, in Chinese, adjectives are a class of verbals and no copula is needed. In this type of sentence, the Chinese speaker is more likely to use the form that deletes to be. He must learn that the form which includes to be is just as acceptable in English.

3.14.2. Clauses may be contracted into noun phrases in English in some cases. This is not so in Chinese. In English, we have sentences like:

Her eagerness to leave surprised us.
I admire John's reluctance to work.

The underlying structure of these sentences consists of two clauses:

She was eager to leave; this surprised us.
John is reluctant to work; I admire this (in him).

In Chinese, the corresponding sentences adhere more closely to the underlying sentences; that is, there is no contraction of clauses into nominals. The most natural way of rendering these sentences into Chinese is:

Her eagerness to leave surprised us.

tā	jǐzhe	yào	zǒu	wǒmen	méi	xiǎngdào
she	anxious	want	go	we	not	expect

I admire John's reluctance to work.

Yuēhàn	zhèmme	bù	kěn	gōngzuò	wǒ	hěn	xiànmu
John	this	not	willing	work	I	very	admire

A more direct translation of the English sentences is permissible, but not considered to be native Chinese. Such patterns are becoming more and more acceptable due to the influence of English:

Her eagerness to leave surprised us.

tā	de	jǐzhe	yào	zǒu	hěn	shǐ	wǒmen	jīngqí
her		anxious	want	go	very	cause	us	surprise

I admire John's reluctance to work.

wǒ	hěn	xiànmu	Yuēhàn	(zhèmme)	de	bù	kěn	gōngzuò
I	very	admire	John	this		not	willing	work

Since this nominalization of clauses into noun phrases is not native to Chinese, the Chinese student may resist the use of nominalized clauses in English. He may have the tendency to adhere to the more extended sentences. Exposure to nominalized clauses in English sentences will help him overcome this problem.

3.14.3. Gerund Nominal.

Related to the above phenomenon is the contraction of clauses into gerund nominals in English. There is nothing in Chinese which corresponds to this type of construction. In English, there are sentences like:

George's continual nagging drove Grace insane.
I worry about his driving at night.

The underlying structure of these sentences is:

George nagged continually. This drove Grace insane.
He drives at night. This causes me to worry.

The Chinese equivalents for the English sentences adhere more closely to the underlying structures:

George's continual nagging drove Grace insane.

George	bú	duàn	de	lūosuo	nòng	de	Grace	fāfēng	le
George	not	cease		nag	make		Grace	go insane	(perfect marker)

I worry about his driving at night.

wǒ	dānxīn	tā	yèli	kāi	chē
I	worry	he	at night	drive	car

The Chinese student must learn that gerunds can function as nominals in the above manner.

3.14.4. Adjective + Infinitive.

In English, there is a pattern exemplified by the following sentences:

It is too rainy to go out.
It is too cold to go swimming.
The road is too slippery to drive.

The underlying structure of these sentences consists of two sentences each:

It is too rainy. We cannot go out
It is too cold. We cannot go swimming.
The road is too slippery. We cannot drive.

The Chinese equivalents for these sentences are closer to the underlying structures of the English sentences:

It is too rainy to go out.

yǔ	xià	de	tài	dà	bù	néng	chūqu
rain	descend		too	big	not	can	go out

It is too cold to go swimming.

tiānqi	tài	lěng	bù	néng	qu	yóuyǒng
weather	too	cold	not	can	go	swim

The road is too slippery to drive.

lù	tài	huá	bù	néng	kāi	chē
road	too	slippery	not	can	drive	car

The Chinese student simply has to learn that the more fluent English sentence is the one which combines the two clauses into one.

3.14.5. Adjective + Gerund or Infinitive.

In English, the infinitive and the gerund often occur after adjectives. Sometimes the two are interchangeable, sometimes one or the other must be used:

Gerund and infinitive interchangeable:

I'm sorry for keeping you waiting.
I'm sorry to keep you waiting.
This kind of fish is good to eat.
This kind of fish is good for eating.

Gerund must be used:

This weather is good for swimming.
*This weather is good to swim.
This soap is good for washing dishes.
*This soap is good to wash dishes.

Infinitive must be used:

I'm glad to see you here.
*I'm glad for seeing you here.
This is a very difficult problem to solve.
*This is a very difficult problem for solving.

In Chinese, there is no formal difference between those cases translated into English as the infinitive and those translated into English as the gerund. Therefore, it is very difficult for the Chinese student to learn which form to use where. Examples of the pattern in Chinese:

I'm sorry for keeping/to keep you waiting.

hěn	bàoqiàn	ràng	nǐ	děng	le	(nèmme	jiǔ)
very	sorry	let	you	wait	(perfect marker)	so	long

This soap is good for washing dishes.

zhèi	ge	féizào	kěyi	xǐ	wǎn
this	(classifier)	soap	can	wash	dishes

This problem is very difficult to solve.

zhèi	ge	wèntí	hěn	nán	jiějué
this	(classifier)	problem	very	difficult	solve

The Chinese student must exert extra effort to learn this distinction in English. Since the logic behind this distinction is elusive, only extensive exposure to sentences exemplifying this distinction will help the Chinese student learn to use the infinitive and the gerund correctly in the above type of sentence.

3.15. Verb Phrase + Complement of Obligation.

There is no construction in Chinese corresponding to the Verb Phrase + for + Complement of Obligation pattern in English. There is a pattern in English exemplified by the following examples:

The professor said for us to do it.
He shouted for you to sit down.

As the Chinese translations of these sentences will indicate, there is no such pattern in Chinese:

The professor said for us to do it.

jiàoshòu	shuō	wǒmen	yīnggāi	zuò	zhèige
professor	said	we	should	do	this

or

jiàoshòu	jiào	wǒmen	zuò	zhèige
professor	command	we	do	this

He shouted for you to sit down.

tā	dà	shēng	jiào	nǐ	zuò	xià	lai
he	big	voice	shout	you	sit	down	(directional marker)

The Chinese student may find it difficult to use this pattern in English and may erroneously utter sentences like:

*He shouted you sit down.
*The professor told us do it.

Again, extensive exposure to actual sentences exemplifying this pattern will help the student absorb this pattern.

3.16. Sentences With the Auxiliary Verb 'May'.

The Chinese equivalent for the English construction Noun Phrase + may + Verb + Wh-ever Clause is radically different from the English construction. The Chinese equivalent is more similar to the construction: Wh-ever Clause + it's okay. (e.g. Whenever you wish to go, it's okay.):

He may go whenever he wishes.

tā	shémme	shíhou	yào	zǒu	dōu	kéyi
he	what	time	want	go	all	okay

You may eat whatever you like.

nǐ	yào	chī	shémme	dōu	kéyi
you	want	eat	what	all	okay

Notice that in sentences that contian the word may, but not a wh-ever clause, the Chinese pattern is almost identical with the English pattern:

You may have dinner now.

nǐ	xiànzai	kéyi	chī	wǎn	fàn	le
you	now	may	eat	evening	meal	(perfect marker)

He may watch TV a little.

tā	kéyi	kàn	kan	diànshì
he	may	watch	(reduplicated verb meaning briefly)	TV

It is the construction: Noun Phrase + may + Wh-ever Clause that is alien to Chinese. Since it is so radically different from the comparable Chinese construction, there will be little interference in learning the English pattern. Extensive exposure to actual sentences will enable the Chinese student to learn it.

3.17. 'There' and 'It' as Subjects.

3.17.1. In English, There are some questions does not mean that some questions are (over) there (at that place). The usage of there in this construction is peculiar to English. The word there meaning a place, is rendered as nèr in Chinese. But in There are some questions, nèr is not used. Instead, the Chinese speaker says:

There are some questions.

yǒu	xiē	wèntí
have	some	questions

Many sentences in Chinese have no subjects because no logical subjects exist. In English, however, there is a tendency to insert pseudo-subjects. The construction It is... is another case of this. Examples are It is raining, It is three o'clock, etc. Of course, one can rationalize and say that it stands for the weather, and the time:

It's raining.		It's three o'clock.		It's late.	
xià	yǔ	sān	diǎnzhōng	wǎn	le
descend	rain	three	o'clock	late	(perfect marker)

Since the Chinese student is not accustomed to using it and there as pseudo-subjects, he may delete the it or there subject, or subsitiute a more concrete subject for it:

*Late.
*Raining.

*Now is three o'clock.
We have some questions. (There are some questions.)
Outside is dark. (It's dark outside.)

Although the last two sentences are correct, the more common way of expressing such things in English is by using it or there as subjects. With practice, the Chinese student will learn to use these expletives.

3.17.2. The passive pattern involving a dummy subject is a pattern alien to Chinese. In English, we have the pattern exemplified by the following sentences:

It was suggested that we go away.
It was discovered that twenty infants died last year.

In Chinese, the passive pattern is not used for such sentences. Instead, an agent serves as the subject, something comparable to the subject On... in French:

It was suggested that we go away.

yǒu	rén	tíyì	wǒmen	líkāi
(literally to have)	person	suggest	we	leave

It was discovered that twenty infants died last year.

yǒu	rén	fāxiàn	qù	nián	yǒu	èr	shí	ge
to have	person	discover	last	year	to have	two	ten	(classifier)

yīngér	sǐ	le
infant	die	(perfect marker)

The Chinese student is more likely to say:

Someone suggested that we go away.
Someone discovered that twenty infants died last year.

than he will say the sentences that are glossed above. He must learn to use the impersonal it subject and to form the passive construction in English using the it subject.

3.18. Expression of Desire.
Desire is expressible in English in the following ways:

would like + infinitive of verb
want + infinitive of verb

The second pattern is not quite as polite as the first, and may sometimes express a greater degree of desire; whereas the would like construction often depends on extenuating circumstances. Compare:

I would like to go to town.
I want to go to town.

I would like you to come.
I want you to come.

Would like and want correspond to xiǎng and yào respectively in Chinese. Yào expresses more willfulness that xiǎng. However, in Chinese, there is not exactly the same difference in politeness between the two terms. The Chinese student is more likely to use want since it is the simpler of the two forms and it is more directly translatable into Chinese. However, he should learn to use would like since it is more polite and represents educated speech.

3.19. Expressions of Preference.

Expressions of preference take a radically different form in Chinese from that of English.

Preference for one thing over another is expressed by the following constructions in English:

would rather A than B
prefer A to B
prefer A rather than B

Examples of how the constructions are actualized in sentences:

I would rather play golf than swim.
I would rather eat steak than beans.
I prefer steak to beans.
I prefer to eat steak rather than beans.
I would prefer to eat steak rather than beans.

The two things being compared are placed side by side in the verb phrase, separated only by a preposition. In Chinese, the most natural way to express preference is to use two clauses:

I would rather study than do housework.

wǒ	(bǐjiào)	xǐhuan	niànshū	bù	xǐhuan	zuò	jiāshì
I	compare	like	study	not	like	do	housework

I would rather eat steak than beans.

wǒ	(bǐjiào)	xǐhuan	chī	niúpái	bù	xǐhuan	chī	dòuzi
I	compare	like	eat	steak	not	like	eat	beans

The Chinese student is likely to utter such sentences as:

*I like to study, don't like to do housework.
*I like to eat steak, not eat beans.

The above sentences are closer to the patterns expressing preference in Chinese. In order to learn the more fluent ways of expressing preference in English, the Chinese student must depart from direct translation from Chinese.

3.20. 'More' and 'Less'.

Chinese students may have trouble learning to use more or less in sentences. In English, more and less function both as adverbs and as adjectives.

More and less functioning as adverbs modifying verbs:

You should sleep more.

nǐ	yīnggāi	duō	shuì	yìdiǎr
you	should	much	sleep	a bit

You should drink less.

nǐ	yīnggāi	shǎo	hē	yìdiǎr
you	should	little	drink	a bit

More and less functioning as adverbs modifying adjective :

You should be more careful.

nǐ	yīnggāi	xiǎoxīn	yìdiǎr
you	should	careful	a bit

He is less obstinate than before.

tā	méiyǒu	yǐnqián	nèmme	wángù
he	not	before	so	obstinate

More and less functioning as both types of adverbs cause some trouble for the Chinese student because there are no comparable words in Chinese. As the above glosses indicate, the translation into Chinese is only paraphrase and not direct translation. The Chinese student must learn to use these words in the context of English sentences rather than seek a translation for these words in Chinese.

More and less functioning as adjectives:

I want some more rice.

wǒ	hái	yào	yìdiǎr	fàn
I	still	want	a bit	rice

You should read more books.

nǐ	yīnggāi	duō	kàn	xiē	shū
you	should	more	read	(plural classifier)	book

He drinks less milk now than before.

tā	hē	niúnǎi	bǐ	yǐqián	hē	de	shǎo	le
he	drink	milk	compare	before	drink		less	

More and less functioning as adjectives cause some trouble for the Chinese student because the comparable words in Chinese usually form part of the verb phrase rather than the noun phrase as in English. This construction may cause some confusion, although it is hard to predict the exact results of this confusion. For instance, the Chinese student may have a tendency to say sentences like: I still want a little rice. Although such sentences

are perfectly grammatical, the Chinese student should try to master the sentence pattern employing more and less. Failure to do so will limit the student's active use of the language.

3.21. Emphatic Stress.

In English, when one wants to reassert or deny something with emphasis, one may do so by giving extra stress to the pronunciation of the auxiliary verb, or to the negative particle in the case of a denial:

John can't come with us. Yes, he CAN.
She SHOULD wash her hair.
They ARE going to go home.
I canNOT let you go.

In the event that a contraction of the Auxiliary Verb + Negative Particle is used, the whole syllable is emphasized:

No, she CAN'T go alone.
No, I DIDN'T say you can go.

When an auxiliary verb is lacking in an unemphasized statement, the dummy do/did is added to the emphatic statement and given emphatic pronunciation. (See 3.7.1. and 3.8.2. for more discussion on the dummy do/did.) Compare:

She did the dishes.	I want to see it.
She DID do the dishes.	I DO want to see it.

The Chinese student has a fuzzy idea of the auxiliary verb as opposed to the main verb since he is not aware of the concept of the auxiliary verb in his native language. After distinguishing the auxiliary verb from the main verb in English sentences, the Chinese student must learn to give emphatic pronunciation to the correct element in a sentence when he is trying to emphasize his statement, since the emphasized element in an emphatic statement in Chinese does not always correspond to that in an English emphatic statement.

3.22. Prepositions and Clause Introducers.

Chinese speakers have the tendency to delete prepositions and clause introducers in some English sentences where they are compulsory.

Phrases such as: afraid of, certain that, sure about, aware of, doubtful about, etc., are represented in Chinese by transitive verbs. A few samples will make this clear:

I am not afraid of ghosts.

wǒ	bú	pà	guǐ
I	not	afraid	ghosts

I am doubtful that it will rain today.

wǒ	huáiyí	jīntian	huì	bú	huì	xià	yǔ
I	doubt	today	will	not	will	descend	rain

He is not aware of the danger.

tā	bù	xiǎode	nèi	ge	wéixiǎn
he	not	know	that	(classifier)	danger

As the glosses indicate, there is nothing in the Chinese sentences that corresponds to words like of and tnat These words are simply deleted in the translation.

When a Chinese student looks up the word afraid in an English-Chinese dictionary, he might find that it means pà in Chinese. If he does not hear or see how afraid is used in an English sentence, he may give it the same function that he would give the word pà in a Chinese sentence, thus producing a sentence like:

*He is not afraid ghosts.

Therefore, dictionaries cannot be relied upon to tell a person how to construct sentences in the foreign language. The student must see the new words used in sentences in order to learn to use them himself.

To remedy the specific problem we are considering, the Chinese student must remember that words like afraid, doubtful, certain, etc. cannot immediately precede noun phrases and that either a preposition or a clause introducer must intervene. It may be helpful if the Chinese student memorizes items like afraid of, aware of, and sure about as individual lexical items. (See section 3.9.1. for more discussion on Verb + Preposition.)

CHAPTER 4: SYNTAX: THE VERB PHRASE

4.0. General Remarks.

We have described the difficulties that Chinese students are likely to have with the structure of the sentence as a whole. We will go on to discuss the difficulties that lie more specifically in the verb phrase and the noun phrase.

Every language makes a distinction between nominal and verbal elements in sentences. Although this distinction is not always clear-cut, we nevertheless find nouns and verb in all languages. It is, of course, debatable whether or not this dichotomy is a grammatical superficiality; that is, many linguists believe that nouns and verbs, or nominals and verbals, are superficial forms and that they relate to the same fundamental phenomenon in the deep structure. For example, in both English and Chinese, the word comb is both a noun and verb (both a comb and to comb are shū in Chinese), and it is a moot point whether the noun comb is derived from the verb to comb or vice versa. For the purposes of language teaching, however, it seems practical to consider nouns and verbs as separate grammatical forms, therefore they will be introduced as separate units in this manual.

The present unit is concerned with the verb phrase. We will compare the structure of the verb phrase in Chinese with that in English and will discuss the difficulties Chinese students have due to the differences between Chinese and English in the structure of the verb phrase.

Table 8

Structure of the Verb Phrase in English and in Chinese

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Number & person concordance between subject & verb	important	no such concordance exists	4.1.1.
Tense	variety of tenses, usage regulated	time expressed not by tense; by aspect markers & other means	4.1.
Subjunctive	exists in English	does not exist in Chinese	4.2.
Modal auxiliaries	exist in both English and Chinese, no one-to-one correspondence		4.3.
Be and have	function in English more diverse than comparable Chinese words		4.4.

Table 8 (cont.)

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Adjectival predicates	introduced by copula	adjective functions as verb, not introduced by copula	4.5.
Two-word verbs	many in English	some 2-word verbs correspond to 1-word verbs in Chinese	4.6.1.
Separable and non-separable 2-word verbs	distinct in English	no comparable distinction	4.6.2.
Position of preposition	precedes object of preposition	either follows object or divided in 2 parts	4.6.3.
Main verb + resultative	more common in Chinese than in English		4.7.
Expression of likeness and difference	syntactic constructions different in English and Chinese		4.8.
Infinitive and gerund	usages regulated	no infinitive or gerund forms	4.9.
Expression of purpose	purposive phrase follows verb	purposive phrase precedes verb	4.10.
Deletion of main verb	possible when auxiliary verb is present	main verb deletable, but not always in same ways as English	4.11.
Double negatives	usage broader in English than in Chinese		4.12.
Position of adverbs	variable in both English and Chinese, but similar adverbs may occupy different positions in English and Chinese		4.13.1.
Prepositional phrase used as adverb	after the verb	precedes verb	4.13.2.

Table 8 (cont.)

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion Section
Always, never often, etc.	immediately follow auxiliary verb	placed in beginning of entire verb phrase	4.13.3.
Time words	usually occur with preposition	usually occur without a preposition	4.13.4.
Idiomatic verb phrases	some special attention will help the Chinese student learn their usages		4.14.
Bring & take	there is a special pattern in English which applies only to these two verbs; a similar pattern in Chinese applies more broadly		4.15.

4.1. Verbal Inflections.

4.1.1. There is no concordance between the subject and the verb in Chinese. Regardless of the person and number of the subject, the verb form is the same. It is not too difficult for a Chinese student to learn the rules of English verbal inflection; the difficulty is in learning to use the correct inflections spontaneously. This latter aim can be achieved only through extensive drilling. It also helps if the student pays extra attention to this problem when composing sentences mentally.

There is also no tense in Chinese verbs. There is aspect, however. Since tense is lacking in Chinese verbs, the Chinese student is liable to utter such sentences as:

*I go to market and buy groceries yesterday.
*I come tomorrow.

Aside from memorizing the rules of tense inflection, the Chinese student needs intensive drilling in order to use the correct inflections spontaneously.

4.1.2. Since there is no tense inflection in Chinese, the Chinese student has to learn to use tense in English. At first, he will most likely associate tnese with time, since this is a concrete method to decide what tense should be used. However, in English, tense does not always accord with logical time. It is much more difficult to explain why a certain tense is used when it does not accord with time. It may be simplest just to memorize the rule rather than to give an explanation for it. One case in which tense does not accord with logical time is when the pre-

sent tense is used to give historic force even when logical time is past:

The Bible says many things.
Augustine writes from a scholastic point of view.
Aristotle tells us much about the mind.

Another case is when the present tense is used with future time when a time adverbial is present. The following sentences are synonymous:

I will leave for Bangkok tomorrow.
I leave for Bangkok tomorrow.

I will return next week.
I return next week.

The movie will start at eight.
The movie starts at eight.

The Chinese student should learn to recognize that the second sentence in each of the pairs is a correct sentence even though the tense does not accord with logical time.

4.1.3. The past tense morpheme takes many different forms in English. After learning where to use past tense, the Chinese student must learn how to form the past tense. Children and foreigners have the tendency to apply the most common pattern to all verbs by analogy. However, in English, many verbs have irregular inflections for their past tense and past participle. From the very beginning, the foreign student must be impressed with the fact that many verbs do not follow the usual inflectional patterns. An open mind will help the foreign student learn the inflections of irregular verbs.

4.1.4. The perfect tense does not correspond to any one particular thing in Chinese. It is difficult for a Chinese student to learn not so much because of its formal construction but because its precise function is difficult to explain. Native English speakers have a feeling for when the perfect tense should be used, but when asked why it is used in the specific instances, few people can give an adequate answer. The perfect formative corresponds roughly to the perfect marker le or the experiential marker guo in Chinese. But some English sentences with the perfect formative can be translated into Chinese without the le or guo marker. In some cases, these markers are optional:

He has studied English for a long time.

tā	niàn	yīngwén	yǐ-jīng	niàn	le	hěn	jiǔ	le
he	study	English	already	study	(perfect marker)	very	long	

I have been to New York only once.

wǒ	zhǐ	dào	guo	niǔyuē	yí	cì
I	only	arrive	(experiential marker)	New York	one	time

He has just left.

tā	gāng	zǒu	(le)
he	just	go	(perfect marker)

I can leave only after I have finished.

wǒ	zuò	wán	(le)	yǐhòu	cái	kéyi	zǒu
I	do	finish	(perfect marker)	after	only then	can	leave

In general, one can explain the perfect tense as pointing to something that occurred or began in the past but is relevant to the present (in the case of past perfect tense). The Chinese student is liable to avoid using perfect tense in speaking English. He may do this by expressing the same thought in a round about way or by remaining silent on the subject. Only extensive practice will give the Chinese student self confidence in using this and other constructions alien to Chinese. Through practice, the student will gain a feeling for the usage of perfect tense, something that cannot be achieved through explanation from the instructor.

4.1.5. There is no future perfect formative in Chinese. The future perfect tense is used in English to express the completion of an act by a certain time in the future. Since future time is expressed mostly by time words in Chinese, there is nothing in the verb itself that expresses futurity. In translation, the future perfect tense is paraphrased:

I will have finished writing this letter before 3 o'clock.

sān	diān	yǐqían	wǒ	huì	xiě	wán	zhèi	fēng	xìn
3	o'clock	before	I	will	write	finish	this	(classifier)	letter

I will have done my work before you arrive.

nǐ	dào	yǐqían	wǒ	huì	zuò	wán	wǒ	de	shì
you	arrive	before	I	will	do	finish	I		work

She will have left by the time her parents get here.

tā	fù	mǔ	dào	zhèr	de	shíhou	tā	yídìng
she	father	mother	arrive	this		time	she	certainly

yǐjīng	zǒu	le
already	go	(perfect marker)

Like the present and past perfect tenses, the future perfect tense is totally alien to Chinese and can be learned only through extensive practice.

4.1.6. The progressive tense does not pose too great a problem for the Chinese student because there is a progressive marker in Chinese that corresponds partially to the progressive in English:

I am studying now.

wǒ	xiànzai	zài	niànshu
I	now	(progressive marker)	study

I was studying yesterday when you called me.

zuótian	nǐ	dǎdiànhua	gěi	wǒ	de	shíhou	wǒ	zhèng
yesterday	you	make phone call	to	I		time	I	exactly

zài	niànshu
(progressive marker)	study

I will be studying tomorrow evening.

míngtian	wǎnshang	wǒ	huì	zài	niànshu
tomorrow	evening	I	will	(progressive marker)	study

In these examples, progressive tense is marked with the progressive marker zai in the Chinese sentences. However, in Chinese, the progressive marker zai is not always compulsory. It is usually optionally deletable. But in English, it is usually compulsory. The Chinese student should remember this fact.

A second point of difficulty is that the present progressive may be used in English to express futurity:

He is leaving next week.
The library is closing at five o'clock today.

These sentences will not be expressed with the progressive marker in Chinese. Either the present tense or the future tense will be used instead. To the Chinese student, it may seem illogical that present progressive is used to express futurity. It is futile to try to explain why the present progressive can be used this way. The student simply must learn this additional function of the present progressive tense.

A problem which is related to the progressive tense is that clause words while and when are not distinguished in Chinese.

In English, the word while refers to a span of time. When, on the other hand, refers to a specific time. The clause introduced by when may or may not have a progressive verb. In Chinese, when and while are not distinguished. The two are translated in the same way in Chinese:

A taxi hit me while I was crossing the street.

wǒ	zhèng	zài	guò	jiē	de	shíhou
I	exactly	(progressive marker)	cross	street		time

yí	bù	jìchéngchē	bǎ	wǒ	zhuàng	le
one	(classifier)	taxi	(objective marker)	I	hit	(perfect marker)

(The order of the two clauses is reversed in the Chinese translation because conditional clauses generally precede the main clause in Chinese. See section 3.4.1.)

I was crossing the street when a taxi hit me

yí	bù	jìchéngchē	zhuàng	dao	wǒ	de	shíhou	wo
one	(classifier)	taxi	hit	arrive	I		time	I

zhèng	zài	guò	jiē
exactly	(progressive marker)	cross	street

A taxi hit me when I was crossing the street.
(Chinese translation same as that for the first sentence.)

*I was crossing the street while a taxi hit me.
(Progressive tense must be used in a clause introduced by while.)

Since the distinction between while and when is not made in Chinese, the Chinese student must pay special attention to this distinction in English.

An additional contrasting point between the progressive tense in Chinese and that in English is that the present perfect progressive is expressed by two clauses in Chinese. In English, the present perfect progressive is used to emphasize the continuous nature of an activity from a time in the past up to the moment of speaking. In Chinese, there is no such complex verb structure to express this idea. Instead, a series of two clauses is used:

I have been studying English for a long time.

wǒ	niàn	yīngyǔ	(yǐjīng)	niàn	le	hěn	jiǔ	le
I	study	English	already	study	(perfect marker)	very	long	

They have been playing tennis for several hours.

tāmen	dǎ	wǎngqiú	(yǐjīng)	dǎ	le	jǐ
they	play	tennis	already	play	(perfect marker)	several

ge	zhōngtou	le
(classifier)	hour	

The Chinese speaker may unwittingly utter such sentences as:

*I study English, I already studied for a long time.
*I am studying English, I already studied it for a long time.

Such sentences are awkward in English. Since, in Chinese, there is nothing comparable to the English perfect progressive tense, the Chinese student must learn this new construction.

An additional difficulty is that the present perfect progressive and the past perfect progressive are translated into the exact same thing in Chinese, with the exception of the optional additional time words. Therefore, the Chinese student must learn to use the present and past in appropriate situations. This is to be included in the general problem Chinese students have with regard to distinguishing the present and past tenses.

4.1.7. Agreement between a grammatical subject and a verb is usual in English, but sometimes agreement is between the logical subject and the verb:

The milk was delivered by plane. (Grammatical
The thirty gallons of milk were delivered. subject is
A number of boys were (!) swimming in the pool. underlined.)

As pointed out in 4.1.1., there is no number agreement between the subject and the verb in Chinese. The Chinese student must first of all learn to make subjects agree with verbs. Following this, he must learn further the exceptions to the rule, such as the one described above.

4.2. The Subjunctive.

In English, the subjunctive mood is reflected by a change in the form of the verb. The two situations where it is important to use the subjunctive are after wish and in the pattern if... would..., when these patterns refer to a hypothetical situation contrary to the actual situation. When the sentence refers to the present time, the past tense of the verb is used to indicate subjunctivity. When the sentence refers to the past, the past perfect tense of the verb is used:

I wish I had a million dollars.
(Meaning: I don't have a million dollars, but wish that I did.)
I hope I'll have a million dollars by the time I retire.
(Meaning: I don't know if I will have a million dollars by then.)
I wish I had had a million dollars last year.
(Meaning: I didn't have a million dollars last year, but wish I had had.)
If I sell my horse before the end of the year, I'll pay you.
(Meaning: I may or may not sell my horse.)
If I sold my horse before the end of the year, I'd pay you.
(Meaning: I'm not going to sell my horse.)
If I had a million dollars, I would go to Greece.
(Meaning: I don't have a million dollars.)
If I had had a million dollars, I would have gone to Greece.
(Meaning: I didn't have a million dollars.)

In Chinese, there is no comparable device for indicating the subjunctive mood. Notice that the form of the verb is the same whether or not the hypothetical situation is contrary to the real situation:

I hope I'll have a million dollars next year.
(I may or may not have a million dollars next year.)

wǒ	xīwàng	wǒ	míngnian	huì	yǒu	yìbǎiwàn
I	hope	I	next year	will	have	a million

I wish I had a million dollars. (I don't have a million.)
(I don't have a million dollars.)

wǒ	zhēn	xiǎng	yǒu	yìbǎiwàn
I	really	wish	have	a million

or	wǒ	yàoshi	yǒu	yìbǎiwàn	jiù	hǎo	le
	I	if	have	a million	then	good	

If I have a million dollars when I retire, I'll go to Greece.
(I may or may not have a million dollars by then.)

yàoshi	wǒ	t ìxiū	de	shíhou	yǒu	yìbǎiwàn	wǒ	jiù	huì
if	I	retire		time	have	a million	I	then	will

dào	Xīlàguó	qu
arrive	Greece	go

If I had a million dollars, I would go to Greece.
(I don't have a million dollars.)

yàoshi	wǒ	yǒu	yìbǎiwàn	wǒ	jiù	huì	dào	Xīlàquó	qu
if	I	have	a million	I	then	will	arrive	Greece	go

Notice that the subjunctive mood is not formally reflected in any way in the Chinese sentences. For this reason, the Chinese student may have trouble learning to use the subjunctive in English. In subjunctive sentences, he is likely to use the past perfect. It seems illogical to him that the past tense is used when the sentence is clearly in the present time, and that the past perfect tense is used when the sentence is clearly in the simple past time. He is likely to say sentences like:

*I wish I have a million dollars.
*If I had a million dollars last year, I would go to Greece.

The proper use of the subjunctive marks the educated speaker. For this reason, the Chinese student should learn to reflect subjunctivity in English.

The Chinese student may have an additional problem with using the wish... pattern in English. Notice that on the previous page, for I wish I had a million dollars... there are two translations in Chinese. The second translation exemplifies the pattern used more commonly in Chinese, and it is the only permissible pattern when the time of the sentence is past; that is, the pattern exemplified in the first translation of I wish I had a million dollars cannot be applied to the past time:

I wish I had had a million dollars last year.

yàoshi	wǒ	qùnian	yǒu	yìbǎiwàn	jiù	hǎo	le
if	I	last year	have	a million	then	good	

Because of this pattern in Chinese, the Chinese student may have a greater tendency to say:

If I had had a million dollars last year, that would be nice.

than:

I wish I had had a million dollars last year.

and:

If I had a million dollars, that would be nice.

rather than:

I wish I had a million dollars.

4.3. Modal Auxiliaries.

4.3.1. Words such as should, will, can, could are called modals in English. The definition of modal is rather elusive and therefore difficult for the Chinese student to grasp. The Chinese student has the tendency to associate it with verbs. However, modals in English differ from ordinary verbs in several important respects. It is only after a student has acquired a feeling for the language through experience that he will understand modals and their usages.

One important characteristic of modals is that they are not inflected to indicated third person singualr. The Chinese student is not likely to make the error of inflecting a modal for the third person singular, but he may be puzzled at why modals are not so inflected while ordinary verbs are. His doubts will be laid aside when the teacher assures him that his is simply a fact of the English language.

The modals would, should, and could may be regarded as the past tense of will, shall, and can respectively, and this is true historically. But would, should, and could are used in sentences that clearly refer to the present time. The Chinese student may wonder why the past tense is used to reflect present time. The explanation is that would, should, and could were used at an earlier stage of the English language to reflect subjunctivity (See 4.2.):

I would like to go.
You should be more objective.
He could be in New York by now.

Most English speakers today are not aware of the sense of subjunctivity in these sentences. But they do know that would, should, and could mean something different from will, shall, and can. Compare:

I will go if you ask me to.
I would go if you asked me to.

I shall call my mother when I arrive.
I should call my mother when I arrive.

You can be the next president.
You could be the next president.

The past tense forms of will, shall, and can have acquired a semantic significance. The semantic significance is not 'past time'. The exact semantic significance of these forms is diffi-

cult to state, but pairs of examples like those above will help the Chinese student gain a feeling for their meaning. He will be able to use these modals correctly in sentences, although he may not be able to state their precise meanings. Since will, shall and can do not mean the same as would, should and could respectively, it would be better for the Chinese student not to consider the second set as the past tense of the first set, but rather, as different lexical items.

4.3.2. There are two ways to express ability in English. With the modal can, the simple form of the verb is used. The the verb to be able, the infinitive is used. Since verbs are not inflected in Chinese, the Chinese student must learn to use the correct form of the verb with each of these two ways of expressing ability:

I can speak Tokharian.
I am able to speak Tokharian.

I cannot speak English.
I am unable to speak English.

Formally speaking, can is a modal and to be able is a main verb. Since the two mean the same thing, it is difficult for the Chinese student to make this formal distinction. In Chinese, there is only one form that corresponds to both these forms in English. The Chinese student simply must learn that can is a modal (occurs with simple verb) and that to be able is a main verb (occurs with the infinitive).

4.3.3. In English, permission is expressed by the two modals may and can. These two terms do not mean exactly the same thing. May has the force that a person has given permission for an act, and can has the force that circumstances permit an act. The distinction between these two terms marks the educated speaker, although it is not always very well maintained in everyday speech. We hear sentences like Can I go with you? although the more correct form is May I go with you? The distinction between these two terms is not so clearly made in Chinese. Both terms may be translated as either néng or kéyi:

The weather is fine. We can go swimming. (Weather permits.)

tiānqì	hǎo	wǒmen	kéyi	qù	yóuyǒng
weather	good	we	can	go	swimming

The weather is fine. You may go swimming. (Mother permits.)

tiānqì	hǎo	nǐ	kéyi	qù	yóuyǒng.
weather	good	you	may	go	swimming

Because can and may are not clearly distinguished in Chinese, the Chinese student may confuse their usage in English. He will simply have to learn this distinction in order to speak correct English.

4.3.4. Necessity for a certain act is expressed in two different ways in English:

1. modal must + simple verb.
2. verb need or have + infinitive.

Examples:

You must pay the rent today.
You have to pay the rent today.
You need to pay the rent today.

In Chinese, the distinction between these two different ways of expressing necessity is not made. The Chinese student must remember that must functions as a modal (that is, it is followed by a simple verb) and that have and need function as main verbs (that is, they are followed by the infinitive of the verb).

4.3.5. In Chinese, possibility is expressed through adverbs rather than through a modal. In English, possibility can be expressed by either adverbs or the modal may-might. In Chinese, adverbs are part of the verb phrase, but they differ from modals in that they may be placed either before or after the subject. Likely possibility is expressed by the term dàgài or hěn kěnéng . These are equivalent to the English adverb probably. Neutral possiblity is expressed by the term kěnéng or yěxǔ . These are equivalent to the English adverb perhaps:

I might get the job. or Perhaps I'll get the job.

wǒ	kěnéng	hùi	dédào	nèi	ge	gōngzuò
I	perhaps	will	get	that	(classifier)	job

He may have forgotten to come. or perhaps he forgot to come.

tā	kěnéng	wàng	le	lái
he	perhaps	forget	(perfect marker)	come

The Chinese student is more likely to use the adverb rather than the modal of possibility in speaking English because possibility in his own language is expressed through adverbs. He is likely to associate the Chinese adverbs of possibility with comparable English adverbs. In order to use the modal of possibility in English, the Chinese student must learn it in the context of English sentences since there is nothing in Chinese with which he can associate this modal. Therefore, the Chinese student must be given many examples of how this modal is used in English sentences and not try to seek a direct translation of it in Chinese.

4.4. 'Be' and 'Have'.

The verbs to be and to have are the most irregular ones in English. Any foreigner will have to exert extra effort in learning all the inflected forms.

An additional problem for the Chinese student is that there is nothing in Chinese that functions exactly as these two verbs

do. There is a word in Chinese that means 'to be' when occurring between two nominals (i.e., A to be B). There is also a word that means 'to be in possession of...' (one sense of to have). But to be and to have have many other functions. When they function as aspect markers (progressive aspect, perfective aspect), they have no precise translations in Chinese. Instead of searching for a Chinese equivalent, the Chinese student would do best to learn to use these words in English sentences directly, without translating them into Chinese. After much practice, he will have a feeling for how these words are used.

4.5. Adjectival Predicates.

Chinese students may delete the copula before adjectival predicates. In English, an adjective that occurs in the predicate must be introduced by a copula. In Chinese, the adjectival predicate occurs directly after the NP subject, very much like a verb:

She is pretty.		That house is very old.				
tā	piàoliang.	nèi	dòng (classifier)	fángzi	hěn	jiù
she	pretty	that		house	very	old

There is the construction NP + copula + adj. in Chinese. But this construction is used only to emphasize the adjective:

She is pretty.		She is pretty.		
tā	piàoliang	tā	shì	piàoliang
she	pretty	she	is	pretty

She's pretty all right, but a little bit stupid.							
tā	piàoliang	shi (copula)	piàoliang pretty	kěshì but	yǒu have	diǎn a bit	bèn stupidity
she	pretty						

The latter constuction: NP + adjective$_1$ + copula + adjective$_2$ (where adjective$_1$ = adjective$_2$) must be followed by another clause that translates as 'but...'.

The Chinese student is liable to utter erroneously:

*She pretty.
*He smart.

The Chinese student must exert extra effort to distinguish adjectives from verbs in English. If a Chinese student remembers that there must be a verb in a sentence and that adjectives are not verbs, he will learn to use the copula before adjectival predicates.

4.6. Prepositions.

4.6.1. Some intransitive verbs in English become transitive verbs when a preposition is added. Examples are: afraid of, react to, think of, etc. Compare:

I am not afraid.
I am not afraid of ghosts.

I asked him a question, but he did not react.
He did not react to my suggestion.

When the weather is so hot, I cannot think.
I think of my friends back home.

The preposition added varies from verb to verb and there is not any infallible guide for determining which preposition is to be used. In Chinese, many of these verbs are transitive and, of course, need no preposition between the verb and the object. For this reason, Chinese speakers have the tendency to omit the preposition where it is necessary in English, producing sentences like:

*I am not afraid ghosts.
*He did not react my suggestion.
*I often think my friends back home.

It must be impressed upon the Chinese student that certain verbs are intransitive and cannot take objects, unless pre positions are added after them.

4.6.2. In 3.9. we discussed two-word verbs. There are 'separable' two-word verbs and 'non-separable' two word verbs:

Examples of 'separable' two-word verbs:

I called up my mother.
I called my mother up.

Please saw off this branch.
Please saw this branch off.

Examples of 'non-separable' two-word verbs:

I object to your prejudice
but not *I object your prejudice to.

I insist on the best.
but not *I insist the best on.

When the object of the two-word verb is a pronoun, the position of the object is restricted:

With 'separable' two-word verbs:

I called her up.
but not *I called up her.

Please saw it off.
but not *Please saw off it.

With 'nonseparable' two-word verbs:

I object to it.
but not *I object it to.

I insist on it.
but not *I insist it on.

When the object of a 'separable' two-word verb is a pronoun, the verb must be separated. When the object of a 'non-separable' two-word verb is a pronoun, the position of the pronoun is exactly the same as the case where the object is a noun.

In Chinese, the distinction between 'separable' and 'non-separable' two-word verbs is not made. As a result the position of noun and pronoun objects of 'separable' and 'non-separable' two-word verbs may be confusing to the Chinese student. It is difficult to predict the errors that he is likely to make; he must learn to make this distinction in two-word verbs in English.

4.6.3. Prepositions in two-word verbs in English are often abstract in meaning. As we indicated in 3.9. and 3.22., there are often no correspondences for prepositions in two-word verbs in Chinese. Prepositions in Chinese generally have concrete meanings.

Another point for comparison between prepositions in Chinese and in English is that prepositions that are not part of two-word verbs always precede their objects in English, but not so in Chinese. In Chinese, what one usually associates with prepositions are two-word constructions or one-word forms that come after their objects:

He	is sitting	on	the table.	
tā	zuò	zài	zhuōzi	shàng
he	sit	at	table	top

It	will arrive	after	tomorrow.		
míngtian	yǐhou	cái		huì	dào
tomorrow	after	only	then	will	arrive

The cat is in the hat.

māo	zài	màozi	lǐ
cat	at	hat	inside

The difference between the position of preposition in Chinese and in English can be accounted for by a general rule:

$$(zài) + NP + \begin{bmatrix} shang \\ li \\ yihou \\ \vdots \end{bmatrix} \quad \text{--->} \quad \begin{bmatrix} on \\ in \\ after \\ \vdots \end{bmatrix} + NP$$

This rule will help the Chinese student understand the difference between the preposition in Chinese and in English. But only practice with prepositions in actual sentences will help him use prepositions fluently.

4.7. Main verb + resultative verb.

There is a class of complex verbs in Chinese, each consisting of a transitive verb plus a resultative verb:

I hit a cup and broke it.

wǒ	dǎ	può	le	yí	ge	bēizi
I	hit	break	(perfect marker)	one	(classifier)	cup

He tore that book to pieces.

tā	bǎ	nèi	běn	shū	sī	suì	le
he	(obj. mark.)	that	(classifier)	book	tear	in pieces	(perfect marker)

The only parallels in English are sentences such as:

I swept the floor clean.
He mopped the table dry.

In English, the resultative follows the object of the main verb. But in Chinese, it precedes the object and is closely bound with the main verb. Moreover, the verb + resultative form is used more often in Chinese than in English. The Chinese student may tend to use the resultative more often than the native English speaker. He may say things that the native speaker would consider odd:

I polished the silverware shiny.
I woke my mother to get up.

Sentences like these would be expressed with a verb plus a resultative in Chinese, but not in English. Another error

that the Chinese student may make is to put the resultative directly after the main verb rather than after the object:

*I swept clean the floor.
*He mopped dry the table.

The Chinese student simply must learn that the resultative comes after the object of the main verb in English.

4.8. Expression of Similarity and Difference.

4.8.1. In English, there are two important ways of expressing similarity and difference. Here we will discuss the construction which is used when an adjective or adverb is included in the sentence:

$$NP_1 + \begin{bmatrix} \text{copula} + (\text{not}) \ \underline{\text{as}} + \text{adj.} \\ (\text{does/do/did not}) + \text{verb} + \underline{\text{as}} + \text{adv.} \end{bmatrix} + \underline{\text{as}} + NP_2$$

Al is as old as Bob.
Al is not as old as Bob.

Al works as fast as Bob.
Al does not work as fast as Bob.

This construction has two correspondences in Chinese depending on whether the sentence is positive or negative. When the sentence is positive, the most common way of expressing the as...as... concept is:

$$NP_1 + \begin{bmatrix} \emptyset \\ \text{verb} + \underline{\text{de}} \end{bmatrix} + \underset{\text{and}}{\text{gēn}} + NP_2 + \underset{\text{same}}{\text{yíyàng}} + \begin{bmatrix} \text{adj.} \\ \text{adv.} \end{bmatrix}$$

When the sentence is negative, the most common way of expressing not as...as.. is:

$$NP_1 + \begin{bmatrix} \emptyset \\ \text{verb} + \underline{\text{de}} \end{bmatrix} + \underset{\text{not as}}{\text{méiyǒu}} + NP_2 \quad \underset{\text{thus}}{(\text{nèmme})} + \begin{bmatrix} \text{adj.} \\ \text{adv.} \end{bmatrix}$$

(In both of these Chinese construction, the first bracket may be placed alternatively immediately after NP_2.)

Mr. Li is as old as Mrs. Li.

lǐ	Xiānsheng	gēn	Lǐ	Tàitai	yíyàng	dà
Li	Mr.	and	Li	Mrs.	same	old

Mr. Li runs as fast as Mrs. Li.

lǐ	Xiānsheng	pǎo	de	gēn	Lǐ	Tàitai	yíyàng	kuài
Li	Mr.	run		and	Li	Mrs.	same	fast

Mr. Li is not as old as Mrs. Li.

Lǐ	Xiānsheng	méiyǒu	Lǐ	Tàitai	dà
Li	Mr.	not as	Li	Mrs.	old

Mr. Li does not run as fast as Mrs. Li.

Lǐ	Xiānsheng	méiyǒu	Lǐ	Tàitai	pǎo	de	nèmme	kuài
Li	Mr.	not as	Li	Mrs.	run		thus	fast

Notice that the (not) as...as... concept in English is expressed by radically different syntactic constructions in Chinese. The difference between the constructions in English and in Chinese is so great that there probably isn't much interference for the Chinese student. The Chinese student should learn the (not) as...as... pattern as an idiomatic construction. Practice with actual sentences will allow him to use this pattern fluently.

4.8.2. There is a second way of expressing similarity and difference in English. When the sentence does not include an adjective or adverb, the following constructions are used:

1. NP_1 + copula + [the same as / like / unlike / different from] + NP_2

2. NP_1 + and + NP_2 + are the same.

3. NP_1 + verb + [the same as / like / differently from] + NP_2

The first two constructions correspond to the Chinese construction:

NP_1 + gēn + NP_2 + (bù) yíyàng
and not same

His temper is like his brother's.

tā	de	píqi	gēn	tā	gēge	yíyàng
he		temper	and	he	elder brother	same

Chinese is different from English.

zhōngguó	huà	gēn	yīngyǔ	b.	yíyàng
China	language	and	English	not	same

Notice that the pattern in Chinese is more similar to that exemplified in sentences like:

His temper and his brother's are the same.
Chinese and English are not the same.

than that exemplified in:

His temper is like his brother's.
Chinese is different from English.

As a result, the Chinese student may have a tendency to say the first set of sentences more readily than the second set of sentences. The Chinese student simply must learn that the pattern exemplified in the second set of sentences is just as common in English. A second type of difficulty that a Chinese student may have is the confusion of the as + adj. + as... pattern with the ...like/unlike... pattern, producing errors like:

*He is like his brother tall.
*He is unlike his brother stubborn.

The difference between the as...as... pattern and the ...like/unlike... pattern must be given extra attention in class.

The third construction in English has no correspondence in Chinese. Chinese speakers do not usually express likeness or difference in a sentence that has a verb but not an adverb. That is, we can translate sentences like 'This plane does not fly as high as that plane' into Chinese, but not sentences like 'This car runs the same as that car' and 'This plane flies differently from that plane.' Because this construction has no correspondence in Chinese, the Chinese student may have trouble learning to use it. He may simply not use this pattern in English or make errors like the following when he does use it:

*Mrs. Li runs like Mr. Li fast.
*This plane flies like that plane high.

Such errors are caused by the fact that Chinese speakers are in the habit of including an adverb in comparative sentences and by the interference from the as + adverb + as... pattern of English. Exposure to sample sentences will help the Chinese student absorb this construction in English.

4.9. Infinitive and Gerund.

4.9.1. Chinese students may have difficulty in learning to use the infinitive and the gerund in English. In Chinese, there is nothing that corresponds to the infinitive and the gerund forms of the verb in English. The most common error that a Chinese student is liable to make in relationship to these verbal forms in English is the substitution of the simple form of the verb for the infinitive and gerund forms.

Verbal complements may take several different forms, but

there are limitations in individual cases and it is difficult for the Chinese student to learn which form of the verb must be used in specific cases:

He started to walk.
He started walking.
*He started walk.

He continued to talk.
He continued talking.
*He continued talk.

I invited him to see the movie with me.
*I invited him seeing the movie with me.
*I invited him see the movie with me.

We began to run when we saw the policeman.
We began running when we saw the policeman.
*We began run when we saw the policeman.

We plan to stay for three days.
*We plan staying for three days.
*We plan stay for three days.

I heard him cough in the night.
I heard him coughing in the night.
*I heard him to cough in the night.

Notice that the simple, infinitive, and gerund forms of the verb may all occur as verbal complements, but there are restrictions on their occurrence depending on what the main verb of the sentence is. The simple, infinitive, and gerund forms of the verb may all correspond to one form in Chinese:

I heard him coughing in the night. (gerund form in verbal complement)

wǒ	tīngdao	tā	yèli	késhou
I	hear	him	in the night	cough

We plan to stay for three days. (infinitive form in verbal complement)

wǒmen	dǎsuàn	zhù	sān	tiān
we	plan	stay	three	day(s)

I heard him sing. (simple form in verbal complement)

wǒ	tīngdao	tā	chàng	gēr.
I	hear	him	sing	song

Sometimes, the gerund form of the verb corresponds to the progressive marker zai in Chinese:

I saw a ship sailing.

wǒ	kàndao	yi	tiáo	chuán	zài	zǒu
I	see	one	(classifier)	chip	(progressive mark.	go(sail)

I heard him singing.

wǒ	tīngdao	tā	zài (progressive marker)	chàng	gēr
I	hear	him	(progres-	sing	song

However, as the Chinese translation for the English sentence 'I heard him coughing in the night' indicates, the correspondence between the gerund form and the progressive marker zai is only an imperfect one (See section 4.1.6.) Therefore, the Chinese student cannot automatically equate the gerund in English with the progressive marker in Chinese.

In English, certain verbs such as want, hope, expect, and plan can only take a verbal complement in the infinitive form. Other verbs, such as begin, continue, start, and like may take a verbal complement in either the gerund or the infinitive form.

There are still other verbs, such as see and hear that may take a verbal complement in either the simple or gerund form. The restrictions for the different verbs are too confusing for the Chinese student. He is liable to either substitute the simple form for the infinitive and gerund forms, or mismatch the form of verbal complements with the different main verbs, producing sentences like the asterisked ones above. The Chinese student needs practice in using complements with the main verbs in common usage in order to avoid errors.

4.9.2. There is a type of complex sentences in English exemplified by the following:

I asked him to come.
Itold him to leave.
I allowed him to go play.
I hired a man to paint my house.

I made him go shovel the snow.
I let him stay a little longer.

The verbal complements in these sentences represent embedded sentences. Notice that the object of the main sentence is the subject of the embedded sentence in the above examples. In Chinese, there is a technical term referring to the main verb in this type of sentence, namely the 'linkverb'. Notice that in the first group of sentences, the verb in the embedded sentence is in the infinitive form, and the verb in the embedded sentence in the second group is in the simple form. This difference in English is due to the syntactic difference in what is called the 'linkverb' in Chinese. That is, when the 'linkverb' is make or let, the verb in the embedded sentence

is in the simple form; when the 'linkverb' is ask, allow, etc., the verb in the embedded sentence is in the infinitive form. In Chinese, there is no corresponding dichotomy:

I asked him to come.
Wǒ | jiào | tā | lái
I | ask | him | come

I let him come.
Wǒ | ràng | tā | lái
I | let | him | come

(Notice that to come in the last sentence and come in this sentence are both rendered as lái in Chinese)

I allowed him to come.
Wǒ | ràng | tā | lái
I | allow | him | come

Notice that the Chinese word ràng corresponds to both let and allow in English. As a matter of fact, let and allow mean the same thing. This further illustrates that the form of the verb in the embedded sentence is dependent only on what the 'linkverb' is. The fact that let takes a verbal complement in the simple form while allow takes a verbal complement in the infinitive form is just a syntactic difference between these two lexical items.

The Chinese student is liable to use the simple form of the verb in the embedded sentence even where he should use the infinitive form because the simple form is used in Chinese and in English sentences where the main verb is let or make. The Chinese student must learn that let and make are exceptions in English in that they can take verbal complements in the simple form, and that the infinitive is usually used with other 'linkverbs.'

4.10. Expression of Purpose.

In English, phrases of reason or purpose usually consist of the infinitive of the verb plus a complement or a prepositional phrase introduced by for. These occur after the verb:

He walks to work to save money.
He locked the door for safety.

In Chinese, the purpose or reason generally precedes the verb:

He walks to work to save money.
Tā | wèi | le (perfect marker) | shěng | qián | ér | zǒulù | shàngbān
he | for sake of | | save | money | | walk | go to work

He locked the door for safety.

tā	wèi	le	ānquán	ér	bǎ	mén	suǒ	le
		(perfect marker)	safety		(object marker)	door	lock	(perfect marker)
he	for sake of							

The Chinese student may erroneously place the phrase of reason or purpose before the verb in English:

*He to save money walks to work.
*He for safety locked the door.

The Chinese student must remember that the phrase of reason or purpose usually occurs after the verb, and that if it goes before the verb, it must come initially in the sentence. This latter form is used when one wants to emphasize the purpose or reason:

To save money, he walks to work.
For safety, he locked the door.

4.11. Deleted Verb

In English, the auxiliary verb can often stand for the verb phrase when the main verb is understood:

Will you go tomorrow? Yes, I will.
He types faster than his secretary does.
If you would stop fighting, so would I.

The Chinese student needs to distinguish the auxiliary from the main verb in English in order to form the type of sentences exemplified above. In Chinese, there is not always a one-to-one translation for the compound verbals. Especially difficult is the usage of does/do/did in lieu of a verb. The does/do/did is a dummy symbol functioning as the auxiliary (See 3.7.2 and 3.8.2). In Chinese, even when there is an auxiliary verb occurring with the main verb and the main verb is understood, it is usually not deleted as it is in English. The Chinese student simply has to learn that sentences like

If you would stop fighting, so would I stop fighting.
Will you go tomorrow? I will go (tomorrow).
He types faster than his secretary types.

are rather awkward in English and that the briefer forms represent more standard speech.

4.12. Double Negation

Double negation in English has the force of the emphatic positive. In English, we say things like 'This is not an

unnatural thing' and 'This type of disease is not uncommon.' In Chinese, a comparable form is not used to express such things. The rendering of the above two sentences in Chinese is closer to the English sentences 'This is a very natural thing' and 'This type of disease is quite common.'

This is not an unnatural thing.

zhèi	jiàn	shì	hěn	zìrán
this	(classifier)	thing	very	natural

This type of disease is not uncommon.

zhèi	zhǒng	bìng	hěn	pǔpiàn
this	type	disease	very	common

A form comparable to double negation in English does occur in Chinese, but its usage is limited to sentences where two clauses are contrasted and sentences where the verb phrase contains an auxiliary verb other than the copula:

It's not that he doesn't know about it,

tā	(bìng)	bú	shì	bú	xiǎode,
he	(neg.emph-atic particle)	not	(copula)	not	know

it's just that he doesn't want to be bothered.

zhǐ	shì	bú	yuànyi	kuǎn
only	(copula)	not	wish	heed

This disease is not uncommon, but is not serious.

zhèi	zhǒng	bìng	(bìng)	bù	pǔpiàn,
this	type	disease	(neg.emph-atic particle)	not	common

kěshi	bú	lìhai
but	not	serious

I can't help but get angry.

wǒ	bù	néng	bù	shēngqi
I	not	can	not	angry

I can't but go.

wǒ	bù	néng	bú	qù
I	not	can	not	go

He won't be so careless, will he?

tā	bú	huì	nèmme	bù	xiǎoxīn	ba
he	not	will	thus	not	careful	(question tag)

Because the usage of double negation is more limited in Chinese than in English, the Chinese student is less likely to use it as broadly as the native English speaker. He is probably more likely to say:

This is a very natural thing.
This disease is very common.

than:

This is not an unnatural thing.
This disease is not uncommon.

The second set of sentences has greater force than the first set. In order to speak as much like the native speaker as possible, the Chinese student should learn to use the double negation construction more broadly in English.

4.13. Adverbs.

4.13.1 The Chinese student may have some trouble in learning to place adverbs of manner in correct positions in English sentences. This is because there doesn't seem to be any regularity to the positions of adverbs in either English or Chinese. Of course, the native Chinese and native English speakers would know where each adverb of manner belongs in his own language, but to learn the position of adverbs in a foreign language is a different matter.

In imperative sentences in English, the adverb of manner usually follows the verb. It may either precede or follow the verb in Chinese, depending on the particular verb; with some verbs, it may occur in either position:

Please talk quietly.

qǐng nǐ	jiǎnghuà	xiǎo	shēng	yìdiǎr
please	speak	small	voice	a bit

Walk slowly.

màn	yìdiǎn	zǒu	or	zǒu	màn	yìdiǎn
slow	a bit	walk		walk	slow	a bit

Stop this immediately.

qǐng nǐ	mǎshàng	tíngzhǐ
please	immediately	stop

In English sentences other than imperatives, the adverb may either precede or follow the verb in some cases, but must be in either one or the other position in other cases:

He secretly told me the facts. He told me the facts secretly.
He works slowly. but not *He slowly works.
We speak quietly. but not *We quietly speak.

In Chinese sentences, the adverb may also either precede or follow the verb in some cases, but must be in either one or the other position in other cases. However, the restrictions in

the individual cases are different for Chinese and English. Therefore, the Chinese student is liable to misplace the adverb, producing sentences like the asterisked ones above. It is only through extensive contact with the English language that the student learns to place the adverbs of manner correctly.

4.13.2 Some adverbial phrases in English consist of a preposition plus a noun phrase. This type of adverbial usually comes at the end of a sentence in English. In Chinese however, it usually comes immediately before the main verb:

They go by bus.

tāmen	zuò	gōnggòng	qìchē	qù
they	ride	public	automobile	go

He found out by looking at the map.

tā	kàn	le	dìtú	cái	xiǎode
he	look at	(perfect marker)	map	then	knew

He answered with a smile.

tā	wēixiào	de	huídá
he	smile	(attributive marker)	answer

I am going to the park with a friend.

Wǒ	gēn	yí	ge	péngyǒu	dào	góngyuán	qu
I	with	a	(classifier)	friend	arrive	park	go

He opened this with a knife.

tā	yòng	dāo	bǎ	zhèi	ge	dǎkāi	le
he	use	knife	(obj. mark.)	this	(class.)	open	(perf. mark.)

They took others' land by force.

tāmen	yǐ	wǔlì	zhàn	le	bié	rén	de	tǔdì
they	by	force	occupy	(perf. mark.)	other	people	(att. mark.)	land

Because of the difference in the position of the adverbial phrase between Chinese and English, the Chinese student may unwittingly say:

*They by bus go.
*He by looking at the map found out.
*He with a smile answered.
*I with a friend go to the park
*He with a knife opened this.
*They by force took others' land.

The Chinese student must remember that adverbial phrases introduced by a preposition generally come at the end of a sentence in English.

4.13.3 In English, adverbs of frequency must occur after the auxiliary verb (when one exists) and before the main verb. Examples of such adverbs are: always, almost, hardly, rarely, seldom, never, ever, etc.:

I can always do this later.
He has almost finished the work on time.
She would never believe that.

In Chinese, comparable adverbs always come at the beginning of the entire verb phrase:

He is often late.

tā	chángchang	chídào
he	always	to be late

He has almost finished.

tā	jīhu	zuò	wán	le
he	almost	do	finish	(perf. mark.)

She would never believe that.

tā	yóngyuǎn	bú	huì	xiāngxìn
she	forever	not	will	believe

Because the position of such adverbs in Chinese differs from that in English, the Chinese student may erroneously say:

*He always is late.
*He almost has finished.
*She never would believe that.
*I always can do this later.
*He hardly could walk.

The Chinese student must remember that, contrary to the Chinese order, the position of this kind of adverb is after the auxiliary verb and before the main verb in English.

4.13.4 Time words in Chinese usually occur without prepositions. In English, there is a class of time words that occurs without prepositions, such as yesterday and now, and a class that occurs with prepositions: on the day I came, in the future, at three o'clock, etc. In Chinese, time words almost invariably occur without prepositions:

in the future	yesterday	at three o'clock
jiānglái	zuótian	sān diǎnzhōng

It is easy for a Chinese speaker to omit the preposition in English even where it is necessary. Compare the time words in the English and Chinese sentences:

It is now three o'clock. (no preposition needed in English)

xiànzai	sān	diǎnzhōng
now	three	o'clock

I get out of work at three o'clock. (preposition needed in English)

wǒ	sān	diǎnzhōng	xiàbān
I	three	o'clock	get out of work

The Chinese student may make such errors as:

* I get out of work three o'clock
* You may need this future.

He may also be overly enthusiastic in applying prepositions before time adverbials, producing such errors as:

* Will you come at tomorrow?
* It is now at three o'clock.

The Chinese student must remember that prepositions are often, but not always necessary before time words in English. Extensive contact with actual sentences containing time words will help him learn this.

4.14 Idiomatic Terms

4.14.1 'Used to' can mean 'past habitual'.

The term used to as in 'I used to go to movies frequently' is idiomatic. In Chinese, there is nothing comparable to this term. In translation, it can only be paraphrased:

I used to go to movies frequently.

wó	yǐqián	cháng	qù	kàn	diànyǐng
I	in the past	often	go	see	movie

He used to come home at five o'clock.

tā	yǐqián	shi	wǔ	diǎnzhōng	huí	jiā	de
he	in the past	(copula)	five	o'clock	return	home	

Anne used to love Peter.

Anne	ài	guo	Peter
Anne	love	(experiential marker)	Peter

The Chinese student is most likely to associate used to with to be accustomed to, as in:

I am not used to the food in the cafeteria.
I am used to the traffic at rush hour.

This usage of the term used to is quite different from the first usage. The Chinese student simply must learn the two idiomatic usages of this term.

4.14.2 In English copula + going + infinitive is an idiom that means something like: will + verb, and occurs very frequently.

I'm going to see the dentist today.
I'm going to be sick if you don't stop this nagging.
I'm going to go tomorrow.

Going in these sentences does not mean literally to go somewhere. This term occurs only in present tense. It differs from other verbs in this respect. This term cannot be translated into Chinese, since in Chinese qù means only to go somewhere. Rather than try to translate it into Chinese the student should learn this term in the context of English sentences. Like all other idioms, this term can be learned only through extensive practice.

4.14.3 In English, to be about + infinitive is an idiom that means that an act is intended for the immediate future:

I am about to get you a cup of tea.
I was about to call you when you arrived.

This term has no direct correspondence in Chinese. In translation only approximate equivalents can be found:

I am about to get you a cup of tea.

wǒ	gāng	yào	gěi	nǐ	ná	yì	bēi	chá
I	just	want	for	you	get	one	cup	tea

I was about to call you when you arrived.

wǒ	zhèng	xiǎng	dǎdiànhuà	gěi	nǐ,	nǐ	jiù	dào
I	just	think or want	make call	to	you	you	then	arrive

le
(perfect marker)

A feeling for how the term about to is used can be acquired through exposure to numerous examples of how it is used in English sentences. No direct translation can be relied upon.

4.14.4 'Can't help + gerund' or 'Can't help but + common verb' is an idiom which is difficult to learn. There is nothing comparable to it in Chinese. It can only be paraphrased in translation:

I can't help overhearing your conversation.

wǒ	méi	bànfǎ	bù	tīngjiàn	nǐmen	jiǎng	de	huà
I	have not	way	not	hear	you (plural)	speak	(att. mark.)	words

I can't help shouting out his name.

wǒ	jìn	bú	zhù	jiào	chū	tā	de	míngzi
I	prevent	not	cease	call	out	he	(attrib. marker)	name
	can't prevent							

I can't help but get angry. (See 4.12)

wǒ	bù	néng	bù	shēngqì
I	not	can	not	get angry

Instead of trying to translate this idiom directly into Chinese, the Chinese student should learn to use it spontaneously in English sentences.

4.15. 'Bring' and 'take'

In English, there is a special sentence construction that can be used only when the main verb is either 'bring' or 'take':

Please bring the books back.
Please bring some fruits home.
He took some of our peanuts home.
He took the chairs back.

These sentences would be translated into Chinese using a similar pattern:

Please bring some fruits home.

qǐng	nǐ	dài	xiē	shuǐguǒ	huí	jiā
please	you	bring	some	fruit(s)	return	home

In Chinese, other verbs also occur in this pattern:

He bought some bread and took it home.

tā	mǎi	le	xiē	miànbāo	huí	jiā
he	buy	(perfect marker)	some	bread	return	home

He borrowed some books and brought them back.

tā	jiè	le	xiē	shū	huí	lái
he	borrow	(perfect marker)	some	books	return	come

In English, the pattern is used only with the verbs take and bring. We don't say:

*Please buy some bread back.
*He borrowed some books home.

To the Chinese student, however, these sentences are analogous to those containing bring and take, and therefore might very well

be uttered. This kind of error can be easily averted if it is pointed out to him that this pattern is limited to sentences where the verb is either 'bring' or 'take' in English.

CHAPTER 5: SYNTAX: THE NOUN PHRASE

5.0. In this unit, we will introduce the differences between English and Chinese noun phrase structure which cause difficulty to Chinese speakers learning English. A glance at the following chart will give the reader a general idea of what these differences are.

Table 9: Structure of the Noun Phrase in English and in Chinese

Points of Comparison	English	Chinese	Discussion in this Manual
Articles	Definite article and indefinite article exist	No definite article in Chinese	5.1.
Proper nouns	Usage of the with proper nouns regulated	No definite article in Chinese, hence no corresponding restrictions	5.2.
Titles	Title precedes personal name	Title follows personal name	5.3.
Series of time and place nominals	Order of elements in the series different in English and Chinese		5.4.
Mass and count nouns	Distinction made	Distinction not made	5.5.
Demonstratives	Number inflected	Number not inflected	5.6.
Expression of possession	Much more varied in English than in Chinese		5.7.
Relative pronouns	Various relative pronouns in English	No relative pronouns in Chinese	5.8.1.
Position of clause modifier	Follows modified word	Precedes modified word	5.8.2.
Possessive relative pronoun	Distinctive in English	No relative pronouns in Chinese	5.8.3.
Preposition plus relative pronoun	Can introduce clause modifier	Syntactic construction different	5.8.4.

Table 9 (cont.)

Deletion of relative pronoun and immediately succeeding verb	Possible in English	No parallel in Chinese	5.8.5.
Descriptive vs. restrictive clause modifiers	Possible in English	Not distinct in Chinese	5.8.9.
Clause nominals	Usage common in English	Usage less common in Chinese	5.9.
WH-ever relative pronouns	Exist in English	Expressed through syntactic construction in Chinese	5.9.5.
If, whether, that	Introduce clause nominal objects	No parallels in Chinese	5.9.8.
Position of adjectives	Occasionally follow noun, usually precede noun	Never follow noun	5.10.1.
Place word modifiers	Usually follow noun	Usually precedes noun	5.10.2.
Of-phrases	An ambiguity in English may confuse Chinese students		5.11.
Intensifiers that occur with comparative adjectives	Precede comparative adjectives in English	Position variable in Chinese	5.12.1.
Superlative adjectives	Usually occur with the	No the in Chinese	5.12.2.
Negative comparison sentences	Two constructions in English correspond to only one construction in Chinese		5.13.1.
Head noun replacement in comparison sentences	Head noun replaceable by pronoun	Head noun deletable	5.13.2.

Table 9 (cont.)

"Similar" comparison sentences	Two constructions in English correspond to only one construction in Chinese		5.13.3.
People	Deletable when preceded by adjective	Words other than people similarly deletable	5.14.
The agentive suffix -er	This suffix in English corresponds to a variety of forms in Chinese		5.15.
Nouns denoting parts of the human body	Can occur only in certain syntactic constructions in Chinese		5.16.
Number word + NP vs. number word + of + NP	Distinction made	Distinction blurred	5.17.
"Every"	Singular grammatically, plural conceptually	Number not important in Chinese	5.18.
Measure words	of follows measure words	No word corresponding to of occurs	5.19.

5.1. Articles.

5.1.1. Articles are an important part of sentences in English. When there is no possessive adjective before a noun, the definite article is used when one is referring to one or more particular things in a class, and the indefinite article is used when one is referring to any one member of a class. There is nothing in Chinese that corresponds precisely to the articles in English. We will discuss here the problem with the definite article the. Since there is nothing in Chinese that corresponds to the in English, in translation the is either simply deleted or replaced by a demonstrative:

The deleted from Chinese translation:

The sun	has	come	out.
tàiyáng	chū	lái	le
sun	exit	come	(perf. mark.)

The	first	problem...
dì	yí	wèntí...
(ordinal number marker)	one	(classifier) problem

The weather	is	hot.
tiānqi	hěn	rè
weather	(very)	hot

The replaced by a demonstrative:

The books	I	bought	yesterday...			
wǒ	zúotian	mǎi	de	nèi	xiē	shū...
I	yesterday	buy		that	(plural classifier)	book(s)

The	one	I	want...
wǒ	yào	de	nèi ge...
I	want		that (classifier)

He went to the church.

tā	dào	nèi	ge	jiàotáng	qù	le
he	arrive	that	(class.)	church	go	(perf. mark.)

Notice that in English, the may make a difference in meaning:

He went to church.
He went to the church.

Man is greedy.
The man is greedy.

All boys are naughty.
All the boys are naughty.

The Chinese student is liable to have difficulty using the in English. He may make the error of either deleting it altogether or incorrectly replacing it with this or that:

*Weather is hot.

*That one I want is over there.
*This one in the middle is the biggest.

(Though the third example is a correct English sentence, its meaning is not the same as "The one in the middle is the biggest.")

The proper usage of the is one of the most difficult things for a Chinese student to learn. It is only after much experience with the English language that a native Chinese speaker will spontaneously use the correctly.

5.1.2. An additional problem with the definite article the is that its usage is not always logical. In general, the definite article the marks specified noun phrases. However, sometimes the occurs where logic does not lead us to expect it. Compare:

He is in school.
He is in the hospital.

In the second sentence, the speaker is not talking about any specific hospital, but the is present. This cannot be explained. It is only through much experience with English that the foreign student will learn such exceptions to the general rules.

5.1.3. There is nothing in Chinese that corresponds exactly to the indefinite article a(n) in English. The Chinese student may have the tendency to associate a(n) with one. Notice in the following sentences, both a and one are translated into yi in Chinese:

I	saw	a	kangaroo	at	the	zoo.
wǒ	zài		dòngwuyuán	kànjian	(yì)	
I	at		zoo	see	a	

zhī			dàishǔ
(classifier)			kangaroo

I	bought	only	one	ticket.
wǒ	zhǐ	mǎi	le	
I	only	buy	(perf. marker)	

yì	zhāng	piào
one	(class.)	ticket

In the first example, yi is deletable because in Chinese, yi before a classifier in post-verbal position is deletable when it is not emphasized; that is, when yi is used for what we think of as the indefinite article a(n).

The Chinese student is liable to either delete a(n) from English sentences or to use one when he should use a(n) instead.

a. I have a good idea.
b. *I have good idea.
c. I have one good idea.

a. There's a typewriter in this office.
b. *There's typewriter in this office.
c. There's one typewriter in this office.

When the Chinese student means to say sentences a., he may say either sentences b. or c. Although sentences c. are not incorrect, they do not mean the same thing as sentences a. In order to learn to differentiate a(n) from one, the Chinese student should compare sets of sentences like a. and c. above. In order to avoid errors like those in sentences b., the Chinese student must remember that the indefinite article a(n) is used when one is referring to any one member of a class of things.

5.2. Proper Nouns.

There are two problems related to proper nouns in English. The first is the plural form of proper nouns that refer to nationalities. The plural forms for proper nouns that refer to nationalities are not inflected when the proper noun ends in an /s/, /tʃ/, or /ʃ/ sound. Compare:

American-Americans	Chinese-Chinese
Filipino-Filipinos	Japanese-Japanese
Indian-Indians	British-British
German-Germans	Dutch-Dutch
Finn-Finns	French-French

The Chinese student must be careful not to inflect the proper nouns in the right-hand column for the plural form.

The second problem concerns the usage of the definite article the with proper nouns. Aside from the problems that Chinese students have with the usage of the in general, there are some specific rules that concern its usage with proper nouns.

The before a proper name singles out or identifies a specific person, place, or thing. In general, when the proper name is sufficient in itself to establish identification, no article is required before the name. Compare:

I know Henry Potter very well.
The Henry Potter that I went to school with is now editor of a newspaper.

The is required when a person is referred to by a title composed

of common noun + an identifying phrase:

The President (of the United States)
The Queen of England

Likewise, the is required when a place is referred to by a common noun + an identifying phrase:

The United States (of America)
The World Health Organization
The University of Michigan
The Dominican Republic

However, there are many exceptions to these general principles, some due to historical reasons. For example, there is a nation called the Philippines. Why isn't this nation called simply Philippines? Because it was originally called the Philippine Islands before it became a nation. Names of islands, lakes and mountains, when they are in the plural, and names of oceans, seas, rivers, canals, deserts, canyons and forests bear the definite article the:

the Canary Islands, the Great Lakes, the Andes, the Azores, the Atlantic Ocean, the Red Sea, the Mississippi River, the Suez Canal, the Sahara Desert, the Grand Canyon, the Black Forest.

In referring to a nationality in general, no article is required if the name has a plural form distinct from the singular form; the is ordinarily used if the name has no plural inflection:

Americans like sports. The British drink a lot of tea. Norwegians usually make good sailors. The French are noted for their fine cuisine.

The may always be used to emphasize one group apart from another group:

He said the Italians, not the Americans, were fond of opera.

As there is seemingly an endless number of rules and exceptions to the rules in the usage of the with proper names, a foreign student cannot be expected to master its usage until he has had extensive exposure to English.

5.3. Titles.

Titles usually precede names in English, except in formal citations. In Chinese, a title, such as: Mr., Mrs., Miss, Professor, Doctor, General, Chairman, etc., follows one's name:

Mr. Li
Lǐ | Xiānsheng
Li | Mr.

Chairman Mao
Máo | Zhǔxí
Mao | Chairman

Prof. Wang
Wáng | Jiàoshòu
Wang | Prof.

The position of titles in Chinese is comparable to that of formal titles in written English. However, in English, this form usually involves citing all of one's names:

John M(c Intyre) Doe, M.D.
Francis J(ames) McKee, S.J.
Robert H(enry) Brown, L.L.D.

This rule should not cause any difficulty for the Chinese student.

5.4. Time and Place Nominals.

In Chinese, time and place phrases are enumerated from the general to the specific. In citing a place the normal order in English is from the specific to the general:

1427 Maple Street, Devon, Wyoming, U.S.A.
Room 2310, Angell Hall

Enumerating the specific before the general is less true of time phrases than place phrases in English:

January 31, 1969
three p.m. tomorrow

There is no general rule for the order of time phrases, but there are rules for specific cases. For instance, in citing a date, the month precedes the date, the date precedes the year. In citing a specific time of the day, one may say quarter to three or two forty-five, half past five or five thirty. Rules such as these will simply have to be learned. In Chinese, the usual order for both time and place phrases is for the general to precede the specific:

3, Lane 5, Dragon Stream Street, Taipei, Taiwan

Táiwān,	Táiběi,	Lóng Quán Jiē,	Wǔ	Xiàng,	Sān	Hào
Taiwan	Taipei	Dragon Stream St.	Five	Lane	Three	number

three p.m. tomorrow

míngtiān	xiàwǔ	sān	diǎnzhōng
tomorrow	afternoon	three	o'clock

January 31, 1969

yī	jiǔ	liù	jiǔ	nián	yí	yuè	sān	shí	yī	hào
one	nine	six	nine	year	one	month	three (thirty)	ten	one	day

Due to the difference in pattern cited above, the Chinese student must remember that in citing an address in English, the order is from the specific to the general. The various rules for ordering time phrases will simply have to be memorized.

Related to the citation of time and place phrases is the citation of personal names. In Chinese, the family name precedes the given name, taking an order opposite of that in English. This difference does not cause difficulties for the Chinese student, but may confuse the English speaker. Many Chinese have adopted the Western form of citation when they transliterate their names into English, but some Chinese retain the Chinese order in citation. Thus, Li Chen and Chen Li may refer to the same person. In such cases, it is difficult to tell which is the man's family name.

5.5. Mass and Count Nouns.

5.5.1. The mass-count distinction is not observed in Chinese. In English, the formal distinction between mass and count nouns is that mass nouns do not occur in the plural form unless one is talking about several varieties of that thing:

She has lots of hair.
The sand on Coral Beach is pink.
The grass on our lawn is green.

But:

The grasses that grow in Michigan are of many varieties.

In Chinese, there is no plural form for nouns. Therefore, there is no distinction between mass and count nouns. To the Chinese mind, hair, grass, and sand may seem to be plural. Therefore, the Chinese student may erroneously use the plural form for mass nouns:

*Can you give me some informations?
*The grasses on our lawn need mowing.

To avoid this type of error, the Chinese student must distinguish mass nouns from count nouns, and remember which nouns belong to the class 'mass.'

5.5.2. A few nouns in English can be either mass or count. Their meanings are different, however. In Chinese, very often the two different meanings of such nouns are represented by two different words:

Drinking	glasses	made of	plastic	are	more	durable
sùjiāo	zuò	de	bēizi	bǐ	buōlí	zuò	de
plastic	make		glass(es)	compare	glass	make	

than those made of glass.
nàiyòng
durable

All	instruction (teaching)	in	this	school	is	in	English.	
zhèi	ge (classifier)	xuéxiào	jiāoshū	dōu	shi	yòng	Yīngwén	de
this		school	teaching	all	(copula)	use	English	

The	instructions	for using	this	machine	are	very	clear.
zhèi	ge	jīqi	de	yòngfǎ	shuōmíng	hěn	qīngchǔ
this	(classifier)	machine		usage	instructions	very	clear

In learning this type of noun in English, the Chinese student must be careful not to associate one such noun with only one of the possible words in Chinese. He must also remember that these nouns are count nouns when used one way, but mass nouns when used another way.

5.6. Demonstratives.

Demonstratives in Chinese carry information regarding nearness-remoteness, but not regarding singular-plural. Plurality is indicated in two possible ways. The first way is by using a number or the word jǐ 'several' following the demonstrative. The second way is to replace the usual classifier with the plural classifier xiē:

This	horse		These	three	horses		These	horses	
zhèi	pī	mǎ	zhèi	sān	pī	mǎ	zhèi	xiē	mǎ
this	(class.)	horse	this	three	(class.)	horse	this	(plural class.)	horse

That	house		Those	houses		
nèi	dòng	fángzi	nèi	jǐ	dòng	fángzi
that	(class.)	house	that	several	(class.)	house

Those	houses	
nèi	xiē	fángzi
that	(plural class.)	house

The Chinese student may have difficulty distinguishing this from these and those. He is more likely to associate zhèi with this

and nèi with that; that is, he is more likely to have trouble using these and those since he does not associate these words in Chinese. He may say erroneously:

*That houses on the hill are for sale.
*This horses are thoroughbreds.

The Chinese student should not have too much difficulty learning to use these and those once he learns the singular-plural distinction of demonstratives in English.

5.7. Expression of Possession.

5.7.1. There are two ways of expressing possession in English that correspond to only one way in Chinese:

The fur of the polar bear
The polar bear's fur

The single Chinese form that corresponds to these two English forms is use of the attributive marker de:

The fur of the polar bear or The polar bear's fur

běijí	xióng	de	máo
polar	bear		fur

The friends of Algernon or Algernon's friends

Algernon	de	péngyou
Algernon		friend

The construction in Chinese is closer to the English form: possessive adjective + noun. Therefore, the Chinese student is more likely to say:

The polar bear's fur
Algernon's friends

than:

The fur of the polar bear
The friends of Algernon

The Chinese student should learn at least to recognize the alternative form in English, since it is used quite commonly.

5.7.2. In English, we distinguish the form Animate Noun's NP from the NP of the Inanimate Noun. That is, the first form is preferred when the 'possessor' is animate and the second form is preferred when the 'possessor' is inanimate: John's mother, the girl's new dress, the door of the church, the lid of the trash can. In Chinese, however, there is no such distinction:

John's		mother
John	de	mǔqin
John		mother

That	girl's	new	dress
nèi	ge	nǚ háizi	de xīn yīfu
that	(class.)	female child	new dress

The door of the church		
jiàotáng	de	mén
church		door

The lid of the trash can			
lāxī	xiāng	de	gàizi
trash	can		lid

The form in Chinese is always NP de NP. The Chinese student may have the tendency to apply the form Noun's NP even to cases where the 'possessor' is inanimate, producing errors like:

*The church's door...
*The trash can's lid...

The Chinese student must learn that the NP of the Noun form is preferred for cases where the 'possessor' is inanimate.

5.7.3. Possessive Noun Inflection.

Possession in English involves a distinction in form not made in Chinese. In English we say:

1. The institute's friends came.
2. The friends of the institute came.

3. Some (two, three, ...) of the institute's friends came.
4. Some (two, three, ...) friends of the institute's came.

Notice that in sentence 2, institute is used and in sentence 4, institute's is used. Aside from this difference, the construction of the two sentences seem to be identical. Notice the Chinese translations for these two sentences:

The friends of the institute came. or The institute's friends came.				
xuéyuàn	de	péngyou	lái	le
institute		friend	come	(perfect marker)

Some friends of the institute's came. or Some of the institute's friends came.					
xuéyuàn	de	yìxiē	péngyou	lái	le
institute		some	friend	come	(perfect marker)

Notice that in the Chinese sentences, there is nothing that reflects the difference between institute and institute's. On the basis of the first sentence, the Chinese student may formulate the rule:

$$N_1 + \underset{\text{(Chinese)}}{\text{de}} + N_2 + VP \longrightarrow N_2 + \underset{\text{(English)}}{\text{of}} + N_1 + VP$$

He may apply this rule to the second Chinese sentence because on the surface the second sentence is identical with the first sentence. By applying this rule to the second sentence, he will get only:

xuéyuàn de yìxiē péngyou lái le. ⟶ Some friends of the institute came.

This mistake can be corrected by pointing out the following additional rule:

$$N_1 + \text{de} \begin{bmatrix} \text{yìxiē (some)} \\ \text{yíge (one)} \\ \text{jíge (several)} \\ . \\ . \\ . \end{bmatrix}_{\text{(Chinese)}} + N_2 \longrightarrow \begin{bmatrix} \text{some} \\ \text{one} \\ \text{several} \\ . \\ . \\ . \end{bmatrix}_{\text{(English)}} + N_2 + \text{of} + N_1\text{'s}$$

These two rules will help the Chinese student use the correct possessive forms. But they require an elaborate mental process. The student must practice with pairs of contrasting examples until he can produce the correct possessive forms spontaneously, without going through the elaborate mental process.

A second problem is that one can say:

Some friends of the institute's...
The friends of the institute...

Some friends of mine...

but not

*Some friends of me...

The Chinese student may extend the possessive constructions involving nouns to include pronouns, thus producing errors like the above phrase. The Chinese student simply must learn that such a restriction on the usage of objective pronouns exists in English.

5.7.4. There is no distinction between the adjectival possessive pronouns and the absolute possessive pronouns in Chinese

(see 2.7.2.). In English, we have the distinction my-mine, her-hers, your-yours, etc. (Only his, its and whose do not have this duality of form.) In Chinese, there is no comparable distinction; consequently, it may be difficult for the Chinese student to learn this distinction in English:

This	is	my	pen.				This	pen	is	mine.			
zhè	shì	wǒ	de	bǐ	zhèi	zhī	bǐ	shì	wǒ	de			
this	(copula)	I		pen	this	(class.)	pen	(copula)	I				

Notice that both my and mine are rendered into wǒ de in Chinese. The Chinese student probably has more of a tendency to misuse the absolute forms for the adjectival forms than vice versa. This is because the absolute and adjectival forms for the third person singular masculine pronoun coincide as his. The Chinese student will identify hers and yours as absolute possessive pronouns. On the basis of:

absolute possessive pronoun	adjectival possessive pronoun
his	his
hers	X
yours	Y

he may apply the his-his analogy and derive hers and yours for X and Y respectively. This, of course, leads the student to the wrong forms for X and Y. The student may unwittingly utter sentences like:

*This ~~is~~ yours book.
*This is hers pen.

The Chinese student must remember that the adjectival form occurs before a noun phrase and the absolute form occurs without a noun phrase following it. It may be helpful for him to memorize the chart in 2.7.2., but in order to use the absolute and adjectival forms correctly and spontaneously, the student should practice with sentences like the following:

My dress is yellow and yours is black.
Her horse is more intelligent than his.

5.7.5. Possessive pronouns are often deleted in Chinese when they are understood. In English, we often use a possessive even when it is not essential to the meaning of the sentence:

Put on your coat before you go out.
John broke his leg while skiing.
We are having our house painted.

In the above sentences, possessive pronouns are used even though we know that one usually puts on one's own coat, breaks one's own leg, and has one's own house painted. The Chinese speaker does not feel the necessity to express the possessive when it is understood:

Put on your coat.

bǎ	dàyī	chuān	shang
(obj. mark.)	coat	wear	on

Mr. Li broke his leg.

Lǐ	Xiānsheng	bǎ	tuǐ	zhéduàn	le
Li	Mr.	(obj. mark.)	leg	break	(perf. marker)

I bought some brushes to paint my house.

wǒ	mǎi	le	xīe	shuāzi	lái	yóuqī	fángzi
I	buy	(perf. mark.)	some	brush	in order to	paint	house

Notice that in the Chinese sentences, there is nothing that corresponds to the possessives in the English sentences. Due to his habits in speaking Chinese, the Chinese student may say sentences like:

*Put on coat before (you) go out.
*John broke leg while skiing.
*We are having house painted.

The Chinese student must learn that possessive pronouns are necessary in English sentences even where they do not convey any additional meaning. (For discussion on the deletion of pronouns and subjects, see 3.1. and 3.10.2.)

5.7.6. In English, the two following phrases are synonymous:

the man who has $100
the man with $100

In Chinese, only one form corresponds to both the above forms. The two are not distinguished in translation into Chinese, and both are rendered as:

yǒu	yì	bǎi	kuài	(qián)	de	nèi	ge	rén
have	one	hundred	dollars	money		that	(class.)	man

The first English construction above is closer to the Chinese translation and therefore is easier for the Chinese student to learn. The second construction is alien to Chinese logic and simply must be memorized as an idiomatic expression.

5.8. Clause Modifiers.

5.8.1. In English, we may divide clauses embedded in sentences into two types: those that modify a noun and those that function as noun phrases. We will call the first type clause modifiers and the second type clause nominals:

clause modifiers: The man whom I saw...
The book which you bought yesterday...

clause nominals: Whoever arrives last...
What I want is...

Here we will introduce some problems that Chinese speakers have with clause modifiers. Clause modifiers in English are introduced by various relative pronouns: who, whom, which, that, etc. In Chinese, all clause modifiers end in the attributive marker de. There is nothing in the Chinese translation of English clause modifiers what reflects the differences among whom, who, that, and which. Therefore, the Chinese student must learn to distinguish among these relative pronouns in English. Which introduces a clause that refers to a non-human noun phrase. Who and whom introduce clauses that refer to human noun phrases. That introduces a clause that may refer to either a human or a non-human noun phrase. These distinctions are not too difficult for the Chinese student to learn. What causes greater difficulty is the distinction between who and whom (see 2.7.1.). Compare:

The person whom I have met...

wǒ	jiàn	guò	de	nèi	ge	rén...
I	see	(experiential marker)		that	(class.)	man...

The man who is riding a camel...

qí	zhe	luòtuo	de	nèi	ge	rén...
ride	(progressive mark.)	camel		that	(class.)	man...

Notice that the difference between who and whom is not reflected in the Chinese sentences. The Chinese student may confuse these two words and say:

*The man who I saw...
*The man whom arrived late...

It may help the Chinese student learn the distinction if he considers that The man whom I saw... means something like: I saw the man, he... and that The man who is holding the umbrella... means something like The man is holding the umbrella, he... In the first sentence, the subject of the relative clause becomes the subject of the first clause in the transformation. In the second sentence, the subject of the sentence becomes the subject

of the first clause in the transformation. Of course, the native English speaker does not go through such elaborate analysis before he uses who or whom. The Chinese student can develop the spontaneity of the native speaker only through extensive practice with actual sentences containing who and whom.

5.8.2. A second problem that Chinese speakers may have with clause modifiers in English stems from the fact that a clause modifier in Chinese always precedes the noun it modifies while the opposite order is true in English:

The book which you bought...					
nǐ	mǎi	de	nèi	běn	shū...
you	buy		that	(classifier)	book..,

The person whom I have met...						
wǒ	jiàn	guo	de	nèi	ge	rén...
I	meet	(experiential mark)		that	(classifier)	person...

The man who is riding a camel...						
qí	zhe	luòtuo	de	nèi	ge	rén...
ride	(progressive marker)	camel		that	(classifier)	person...

Notice that the clause modifier comes second in the English sentences and first in the Chinese sentences.

The Chinese student is accustomed to the order of sentence elements in Chinese. Although he can learn the English word order, he may inadvertently utter sentences like:

*You bought that book, it...
*I have met that person, he...
*Riding a camel, that man...

Phrases of this sort will be either incorrect or, if not strictly incorrect, inappropriate to the context. Extensive exposure to relative clauses in English sentences will help the Chinese student overcome his mental habits.

5.8.3. A third problem that Chinese speakers may have with clause modifiers stems from the fact that the distinction between the possessive relative pronoun whose and other relative pronouns exists in English, but is not reflected formally in Chinese. In English, there is a class of clause modifiers introduced by the possessive relative pronoun whose:

The man whose house burned down is my brother.

This sentence is rendered into Chinese as:

fángzi	bèi	shāodiào	de	nèi	ge	rén	shì	wǒ	gēge
house	(passive marker)	burned		that	(class.)	man	is	I	older brother

In the Chinese sentence, there is nothing formal that indicates that the house belonged to the brother, but one can guess this from the context. Because of this lack of formal distinction between whose and who, whom, that, etc., in Chinese, the Chinese student needs to be impressed with the importance of using the relativizer whose rather than who, that, etc. in this type of English sentence.

5.8.4. Chinese speakers may also have trouble with clause modifiers introduced by a prep. + which in English. There is a certain class of clause modifiers in English introduced by relativizers like to which, into which, for whom, etc. In Chinese, the exact relationship between the embedded clause and the main clause is signaled by the context and not by any formal means as in English. Therefore, special care must be taken in teaching a Chinese student to use the correct relativizer in specific cases:

the box into which I put the candy...

wǒ	bǎ	táng	bǎi	zài	lǐmiàn	de	nèi	ge	hézi...
I	(object marker)	candy	put	at	inside		that	(classifier)	box...

The man to whom I am referring...

wǒ	zhǐ	de	nèi	ge	rén...
I	point to (referring to)		that	(classifier)	man...

Because the preposition in this type of relative clause introducer is not reflected in the Chinese sentence, the Chinese student will have the tendency to delete the preposition from the relative clause introducer, producing sentences like:

*The man whom I spoke is over there.
*The problem which I am referring is not difficult.

The Chinese student may avoid this type of error by reminding himself that the lexical items involved are really speak of, refer to, etc. rather than simply speak, refer, etc. He must also learn that the preposition in these lexical items may be optionally transposed to precede the relative clause introducer.

5.8.5. In English, clause modifiers may be contracted by deletion of the relative pronoun and the immediately following verb form. In Chinese, there is no corresponding distinction between the contracted and the non-contracted sentence forms:

The girl who is singing is my sister.
The girl singing is my sister.

zài	chàng	gē	de	nǚhái	shì	wǒ	de	mèimei
(prog. mark.)	sing	song		girl	is	I		younger sister

The girl who was hit by the car is my sister.
The girl hit by the car is my sister.

bèi	chēzi	zhuàng	le	de	nǚhái	shì	wǒ	de	mèimei
(passive marker)	car	hit	(perf. mark.)		girl	is	I		younger sister

This is the man that I saw.
This is the man I saw.

zhè	shì	wǒ	kànjiàn	de	rén
this	is	I	saw		person

I've read the book which you gave me.
I've read the book you gave me.

nǐ	gěi	wǒ	de	nèi	běn	shū,	wǒ	kàn	guo	le
you	give	me	(attr. mark.)	that	(classifier)	book	I	read	(experimental marker)	(perf. mark.)

I met the man whom I admired.
I met the man I admired.

wǒ	jiàndao	le	wǒ	zuì	zūnjìng	de	nèi	ge	rén
I	met	(perf. mark.)	I	most	admire		that	(class.)	person

The Chinese student probably will use the non-contracted relative clause construction in English more readily than the contracted one. But he must learn to recognize the contracted construction when he hears it.

5.8.6. In English, there is an ambiguity which arises from the fact that the contracted clause modifier and another form of noun modification have the same surface structure. In English, we have the synonymous pairs:

1. The man who is eating fish...
2. The man eating fish...

3. The fish which eats men...
4. The man-eating fish...

Sentences 2 and 4 have the same surface structure when spoken. (They are distinguished in writing by a hyphen in the second case.) When spoken, one wonders whether 'The man who is eating fish' or 'The fish which eats men' is referred to. In Chinese there is only one construction for each of the pairs above:

The man who is eating fish or The man eating fish

zài	chī	yú	de	rén
(progressive marker)	eat	fish		man

The fish which eats men or The man-eating fish

chī	rén	de	yú
eat	man		fish

There is no ambiguity in Chinese as there is in English. The Chinese student needs to be warned that such ambiguity exists in English. In most cases, the context would nullify the ambiguity, but the above example is one that is ambiguous.

5.8.7. Adjectives and clause modifers.

In English, we have the synonymous forms:

NP + who (which, that,...) + copula + adjective
The + adjective + NP

Like: The pretty girl, the girl who is pretty. Both of these two English forms translate into Chinese as:

the pretty girl, the girl who is pretty

piàoliang	de	nǚ	háizi
pretty		female	child

As the glosses indicate, the construction in Chinese is closer to the construction: The + adjective + NP in English.

The Chinese student is more liable to say:

the pretty girl
the naughty boy
the difficult problem
my dog

than:

the girl who is pretty
the boy who is naughty
the problem which is difficult
the dog which is mine

The beginning student need not use the more elaborate construction, but he should at least learn to recognize it when he hears it.

5.8.8. Contracted clause modifier vs. adjective.
In English, the following NP's are synonymous:

the boy who was frightened

the frightened boy
the boy frightened...

In the second phrase above, the adjective is 'frightened.' In the third phrase, it seems that the adjective 'frightened' is repositioned to follow the noun 'boy.' The Chinese student may be puzzled at why the adjective 'frightened' can be transposed while the adjective 'pretty' cannot. That is, we can say: the pretty girl..., but not *the girl pretty... This puzzlement stems from the fact that 'frightened' in the third phrase is misconstrued as an adjective. In reality, it is the verb, and the entire phrase is the contracted form of the clause modifier 'the boy who was frightened...' (See 5.9.5). The confusion stems from the fact that 'frightened' can be both an adjective and the past participle of a verb. Since 'pretty' is only an adjective, it can occur only before the modified noun. This further explains why one can say:

the boy who was hit by a car...
the boy hit by a car...

but not:

*the hit boy...

The above is not correct English because 'hit' can only be a verb and cannot be an adjective.

The Chinese student must learn that some words can function only as verbs, some only as adjectives, but some can function both as verbs and as adjectives. It is only with this latter class of words that we find triplets of synonymous phrases such as those illustrated above.

5.8.9. Among clause modifiers in English, we may distinguish those that are descriptive from those that are restrictive. This distinction is formally reflected in English:

My brother, who works in the hospital, is a doctor.
My brother who works in the hospital is a doctor.

The speaker of the first sentence probably has only one brother and he works in the hospital. The speaker of the second sentence probably has more than one brother and he is talking about the brother who works in the hospital. In Chinese, the distinction between these two types of clause modifiers is blurred. The first English sentence can be translated into Chinese as:

My brother, who works in the hospital, is a doctor.

wǒ	de	zài	yīyuàn	zuòshì	de	nèi	ge	gēge	shì	ge	dàifu
I		at	hospital	work		that		(older) brother	is	(clas-sif.)	doctor

The relative clause in the above sentenc behaves the same as all other types of relative clause in Chinese. As for the second sentence, the Mandarin speaker would normally not translate it into one, but rather into two sentences:

My brother who works in the hospital is a doctor.

wǒ	gēge	zài	yīyuàn	zuòshì,	tā	shì	ge	dàifu.
I	brother	at	hospital	work	he	is	a	doctor

The second English sentence is probably confusing to a Mandarin speaker. He is apt to interpret it the same as the first English sentence. The Chinese student must learn the distinction between these two types of clause modifiers. It may be helpful to expose him to pairs of sentences like the ones above in which the two types of clause modifiers are contrasted.

5.9. Clause Nominals.

5.9.1. The second type of embedded sentences are clause nominals. Clause nominals may or may not be introduced by relative pronouns. Here we will discuss those clause nominals not introduced by relative pronouns.

In English, there are three ways to express the fact that + clause:

that...(clausal):
That he won was exciting.

for...to (infinitival):
For him to win was exciting.

(Possessive adjective) + Verb + ing (gerundal):
His winning was exciting.

In Chinese, clauses are nominalized without any addition or change in the structure:

It's not easy for me to come. or
My coming is not easy.

wǒ	lái	shì	hěn	bù	róngyi
I	come	(copula)	'very'	not	easy

That he was late was unexpected.

tā	chídào	shì	hěn	yìwài	de	shì
he	late	(copula)	very	unexpected		thing

As a consequence of the lack of nominalizing particles in Chinese, the three possible forms in English are often difficult for the Mandarin speaker to distinguish. In some cases, a sentence containing a nominalized clause would best be translated into a Chinese sentence without using a nominalized clause at all:

It's not easy for him to write a letter.

xiě	xìn,	duì tā	lái jiǎng	hěn	bù	róngyi
write	letter	him		'very'	not	easy
		idiom meaning 'speaking of him'				

The Chinese student may have the tendency to delete clause nominalizers altogether when speaking English, producing errors like:

* I come is not easy. (he means: For me to come is not easy.)
* He arrived late was expected. (he means: That he arrived late was expected.)
* She win was unusual. (he means: Her winning was unusual.)

Because the clause nominalizers do not correspond to anything in Chinese, the Chinese student can learn them only through memorization. Sometimes, there are limitations on which form of nominalization can be used:

We can say:
For me to come is not easy.
My coming is not easy.

But, That I come is not easy grates against the native ear. It is only through years of contact with English that the Chinese speaker will acquire a feeling for such subtle distinctions.

5.9.2. Clause nominals as subjects.

In English, we have the synonymous sentences:

He said that you are the best student.
That you are the best student is what he said.

He cheated at the poker game.
What he did was cheat at the poker game.

In Chinese, there is no construction paralleling that found in the second sentence in each set above. Translation of the first sentence must serve for both:

He said that you are the best student or That you are...

tā	shuō	nǐ	shì	zùi	hǎo	de	xuésheng
he	say	you	(copula)	most	good		student

He cheated at the poker game or What he did was cheat at the poker game.

tā	dǎ	púkè	piàn	rén
he	play	poker	cheat	people

The pattern in Chinese is closer to the pattern found in the first sentence in each of the sets. Therefore, the Chinese student is more likely to say:

He said that you are...
He cheated at the poker game.

than:

That you are the best student is what he said.
What he did was cheat at the poker game.

Since the first of the two patterns is the more common one in English, this is not a serious problem for the Chinese student. He should, however, at least learn to recognize the more complicated construction when he hears it.

5.9.3. There are several words in English which serve as question words and as relative pronouns: who, which, what, etc. (As pronouns, these words can have ever added to form indefinites.) Whether introducing a question (cf. section 3.7.2.) or a clause nominal, these "WH words" always come at the beginning of the clause in which they occur:

What do you want? (question)
What he wants is a passing grade. (clause nominal)

Therefore these words may occupy a position different from that of their corresponding non-WH words:

Position of WH word different from corresponding non-WH word:

I want an apple.
What I want is an apple. (What corresponds to apple in the first sentence.)

John took the car.
Whatever John took... (Whatever corresponds to the car in the first sentence.)

Position of WH word same as that of corresponding non-WH word:

John took the car.
Whoever took the car... (Whoever corresponds to John in the first sentence.

This one is better.
Which is better? (Which corresponds to this one in the first sentence.)

When the WH word corresponds to a non-WH word which is in initial position in a clause, then the position of the WH word

is the same as that of the non-WH word. Otherwise, their positions are different.

Question words in Chinese, whether in direct questions or in constructions that correspond to English relative clauses, always occupy the same position as the term that would answer the question:

I eat candy.			He took twenty dollars.					
wǒ	chī	tángguǒ	tā	ná	le	èrshí	kuài	qián
I	eat	candy	he	take	(perf. marker)	twenty	dollar	money

What do you eat?			I know what he took.					
nǐ	chī	shénme	wǒ	xiǎode	tā	ná	le	shénme
you	eat	what	I	know	he	took	(perfect marker)	what

Because of this difference in word order between English and Chinese, the Chinese student may erroneously say:

*I know he took what.
*You eat what?
*I don't know you dislike whom.

The Chinese student must exert extra effort to learn that WH words come in initial position in clauses.

5.9.4. Aside from the position of WH words, the Chinese student may have trouble ordering the other elements in a nominalized clause introduced by a WH word. This is due to a confusion between the word order in questions and nominalized clauses, both of which can be introduced by WH words. The word order in these two types of clauses is different:

What is the story?
I'll tell you what the story is.

What do you do for a living?
I know what you do for a living.

How can we repair this?
Only George will know how we can repair this.

We have discussed the word order in WH word questions (3.7.2.). In the nominalized clause introduced by a WH word, the word order is exactly the same as that in a declarative sentence:

The story is...
I'll tell you what the story is.

I do carpentry for a living.
Do you like what you do for a living?

We can repair this with glue.
Only George will know how we can repair this.

Because the word order in these clauses is the same as that for declarative sentences, we might assume that they would not cause the Chinese student much difficulty. However, because he has learned to associate WH words with the reversed order in questions, he is likely to construct such incorrect sentences as the following:

*I'll tell you what is the story.
*Do you like what do you do for a living?
*Only George knows how can we repair this.

The Chinese student should not have too much difficulty correcting this type of error if the distinction between the two kinds of word order is pointed out to him.

5.9.5. We noted above (5.9.3.) that an additional set of English relative pronouns are formed by the addition of ever to the WH words. Chinese students may have trouble distinguishing between the relative pronouns whichever, whoever, and whomever, and the relative pronouns which, who, and whom. The first set is used to introduce only clause nominals; the second set is used to introduce questions and clause modifiers:

I'll buy this one.	(Whichever one you like
I'll buy whichever one you like.	functions the same way as this one. Both are noun phrases.)
I bought the one which you liked.	(Which you liked modifies the one.)
Tom is a rascal.	(Whoever did this functions
Whoever did this is a rascal.	the same way as Tom. Both are noun phrases.)
The man who did this is a rascal.	(Who did this modifies the man.)
I'll hire whomever you choose.	(Whomever you choose
I'll hire the best man available.	functions the same way as the best man available. Both are noun phrases.)
I'll hire the man whom you choose.	(Whom you choose modifies the man.)

The distinction between which, who, and whom, and whichever, whoever, and whomever is not clear in Chinese:

I'll buy the one which you like.

wǒ	mǎi	nǐ	xǐhuan	de	nèi	ge
I	buy	you	like		that	(classifier)

I'll buy whichever one you like.
Chinese translation either same as above or:

nǐ	xǐhuan	něi	ge	wǒ	jiù	mǎi	něi	ge
you	like	which	(classifier)	I	then	buy	which	(classifier)

The person who broke this is a rascal.

bǎ	zhèi	ge	nòng	huài	de	rén	shì	ge	huài dàn
(object marker)	this	(classifier)	make break	bad		person	(copula)		bad egg (rascal)

Whoever broke this is a rascal.
Chinese translation same as above or:

shéi	bǎ	zhèi	ge	nòng	huài	shéi	jiù	shì	ge	huài dàn
who	(object marker)	this	(classifier)	make	bad	who	then	(copula)		bad egg (rascal)

I'll hire the man (whom) you choose.

wǒ	gù	nǐ	yào	de	nèi	ge	rén
I	hire	you	want		that	(classifier)	person

I'll hire whomever you choose.
Chinese translation same as above or:

nǐ	yào	shéi,	wǒ	jiù	gù	shéi
you	want	who(m)	I	then	hire	who(m)

Because the two sets of relative pronouns are so similar in appearance, the Chinese student may have trouble distinguishing them in English. He is likely to use the WH relative pronouns even in clause nominals:

*I'll buy which one you like.
*Who did this is a rascal.
*I'll hire whom you choose.

The Chinese student must learn that the set which, who and when is used in clause modifiers and questions, while the set whichever, whoever, whenever is used to introduce clause nominals. Practice with contrasting pairs will help him grasp the difference between the two sets.

5.9.6. The distinction between when and whenever, what and whatever, is even more difficult for the Chinese student to make than the distinction discussed in the previous section.

Sometimes, the difference between when and whenever is very slight:

We will go whenever you are ready.
We will go when you are ready.

Sometimes, the difference between these two words is more readily detectable:

When you come, bring some money.
Whenever you come, bring some money.

Notice that in the first sentence, when means something like at the time. In the second sentence, whenever means something like every time.

The difference between what and whatever is likewise subtle:

What happened to your car?
Whatever happened to your car?!

Sometimes the difference between these two words is more easily detectable:

What I like about this place is the climate.
Whatever he does, he can't seem to stay out of trouble.

The first sentence means: The thing I like about this place...
The second sentence means: No matter what he does...

The main grammatical difference between what and whatever, and when and whenever, is that what and when are used in questions and whatever and whenever are usually not used in questions (except in something like: Whatever happened to your car?! which is more like an exclamatory question.) When what, whatever, wher and whenever are used to introduce clauses, the difference is in the meaning of these words. Sometimes, the difference is very subtle. Only practice with contrasting pairs will help the foreign student grasp the difference between the two sets. The Chinese student will probably resist using whatever and whenever and may substitute what and when for these words. Additional exercises for using whatever and whenever in sentences may be helpful.

5.9.7. The Chinese student may need to pay extra attention to the usage of wherever and however. The difference between where and wherever, and between how and however is not difficult to perceive. Notice the different contexts in which these words occur:

Where are you going?
This is the place where Columbus landed.
This is where Columbus landed.
Where you go is of no concern of ours.

Wherever you go, don't forget where you are from.

How do you write this?
This is how I like my steak.
How wonderful!

However expensive this is, I want it.
This is a fine house. However, I can't afford it.

The syntactic contexts of where and how may overlap with those of wherever and however respectively. But their meanings are quite exclusive. Wherever: no matter where. However: no matter how; but,

The Chinese student may resist using wherever and however, and may substitute where and how for them. But once he is given examples of how these two words are used in sentences, he should have little difficulty learning to use these words.

5.9.8. In English, embedded sentences can function as objects of verbs such as know, said, think, etc. We call such embedded sentences 'clause complements'. When the embedded sentence is a question, the conjunction if or whether is necessary:

I don't know whether he will come or not.
I don't know if he has arrived yet.

When the embedded sentence is a statement, the conjunction that is often used, but it is not necessary:

He said that he will come tomorrow.
He said he will come tomorrow.

I know that you don't like spinach.
I know you don't like spinach.

In Chinese, there are no correspondences for either of these types of conjunctions:

He said that he won't be coming tomorrow.

tā shuō	tā	míngtian	bù	lái	le
He say	he	tomorrow	not	come	(perfect marker)

I know that you don't like spinach.

wǒ	zhīdào	nǐ	bù	xǐhuan	buòcài
I	know	you	not	like	spinach

I don't know whether he will come or not.

wǒ	bù	zhīdào	tā	lái	bù	lái
I	not	know	he	come	not	come

I don't know if he has arrived yet.

wǒ	bù	zhīdào	tā	dào	le	méiyǒu
I	not	know	he	arrive	(perfect marker)	not

Notice that in these sentences, the conjunctions are simply deleted from the Chinese translations. The Chinese student will have the tendency to delete such conjunctions in English sentences:

I know you don't like spinach.
* He didn't say it will rain tomorrow or not. (he means: He didn't say whether it will rain tomorrow.)
* I don't know you will like this. (he means: I don't know if you will like this.)

In order to avoid this kind of error, the Chinese student must remember that it is always correct to include such a conjunction in this kind of context and that it is incorrect to delete such a conjunction when the embedded sentence is a question.

There is an additional problem that Chinese students have in using if to introduce clause complements. When if is used to introduce clause complements, it means whether...or not.

The Chinese student may have the tendency to think of if only as the particle that introduces hypothetical clauses (e.g.: If it rains tomorrow... If I win...). Chinese students will probably resist using if as a noun phrase complement introducer, since they are less familiar with this usage of the word. The instructor should give special attention to this usage of if in order to help the Chinese student overcome this barrier.

5.10. Modifiers.

5.10.1. Adjectives invariably precede the modified noun in Chinese. In English, sometimes the adjective can follow the modified noun, as in the lights outside (the outside lights). In Chinese, there is no alternative form in which the adjective follows the noun. The adjective + noun formation in Chinese is:

adjective + de + modified noun

wàitou outside	de	dēng light
piàoliàng pretty	de	nǚháizi girl

The Chinese student is more likely to say:

the outside lights

than:

the lights outside

It is difficult for a foreign student to know exactly what adjectives in English may follow the modified noun. He can stay on the safe side by always placing the adjective before the modified noun. However, he should learn to recognize the less common order when he hears it.

5.10.2. Place words that modify nouns usually follow the noun in English. We say:

The paper on the table...
The towels in the drawer...
The shop by the park...

In Chinese, such place word modifiers generally precede the modified noun:

The paper on the table...

zhuōzi	shang	de	zhǐ
Table	top		paper

The towels in the drawer...

chōuti	lǐ	de	máojǐn...
drawer	inside		towel

The shop by the park...

gōngyuan	pángbiār	de	pùzi
park	next to		shop

Because of this difference in word order, the Chinese student may erroneously say:
*On the table paper...
*In the drawer towel...
*By the park shop...

The Chinese student must remember that place words follow the modified noun in English.

5.11. The Meaning of OF Phrases.

In English of phrases are often ambiguous. A question of importance can mean either an important question or a question of whether something is important. Similarly, a problem of relative magnitude can mean either a more or less important problem or a problem of the relative size of something. This type of ambiguity does not exist in Chinese. The two different underlying forms that are expressed with the same surface form in English are expressed with two different surface forms in Chinese:

a question of importance (meaning: an important question)

zhòngyao	de	wèntí
important		question

a question of importance (meaning: a question of whether something is important)

zhòngyao	bú	zhòngyao	de	wèntí
important	not	important		question

This possible ambiguity in English may be a problem for native English speakers. It becomes even more pronounced for the Chinese student learning English as a second language. The Chinese student has the tendency to interpret such ambiguous phrases in the first way, that is, as an adjective preceding a noun; and this will lead to misunderstanding if the speaker intends the second possible interpretation. The Chinese student must learn that there are two possible interpretations for this type of construction. Exposure to numerous examples will be helpful.

5.12. Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

5.12.1. Position of intensifiers.

Intensifiers such as much, a little, a lot, even, still, somewhat, etc., which accompany the comparative adjective, invariably precede the comparative adjective in English:

a little better
much faster
a lot cheaper
even more intelligent
slightly colder

In Chinese, such intensifiers may either precede or follow the comparative adjective, depending on the particular intensifier. There is even a set of intensifiers that come in pairs, with the first member preceding and the second member following the adjective:

intensifier following adjective:

a little better			much faster		
hǎo	yìdiǎr		kuài	de	duō
good	a little		fast		much

intensifier preceding adjective:

even more intelligent than I			
bǐ	wǒ	hái	cōngmíng
compare	me	still	intelligent

more or less the same height	
chàbuduō	gāo
more or less	tall

intensifier pair:

slightly faster			
shāowéi		kuài	yìdiǎr
slightly		fast	a little

The Chinese student may forget to always place intensifiers

before the comparative in English because of his habits in speaking Chinese. He may say:

*faster a little
*colder slightly

He must remember that intensifiers must precede the comparative in English. This should not be a difficult rule to learn.

5.12.2. In English, the superlative adjective is invariably preceded by the definite article the when it precedes a noun, and usually so when it stands along with the noun deleted

Superlative preceding a noun:

The tallest building in the world...
Laura is the most beautiful girl in Texas.
Herby is the fattest superman alive.

Superlative standing alone without a noun following it:

My horse is by far the most intelligent.
Love is best (Exception: no the preceding the superlative best.)

The Chinese student of English has the tendency to delete the definite article for two reasons: 1) with most other adjectives in English, the definite article is not used (Example of exception: this movie is the better of the two.)
2) There is nothing comparable to this usage of the definite article in Chinese (see 5.1.1.). In Chinese, the superlative adjective is made up of the superlative marker zuì most plus the adjective and behaves exactly like all other adjectives:

My horse is the most intelligent				
wǒ	de	mǎ	zuì (superlative marker)	cōngmíng
I		horse		intelligent

Even the fastest automobile would take one hour							
zuì (superlative marker)	kuài	de	chēzi	yě	yào	yì	xiǎoshí
	fast		automobile	also	need	one	hour

5.13. Comparative Constructions.

5.13. Two negative comparative constructions in English correspond to only one construction in Chinese:

Cloth shoes are less expensive than leather shoes.
Cloth shoes aren't as expensive as leather shoes.

Both these sentences are translated into Chinese as:

bù	xié	méi	yǒu	pí	xié	guì
cloth	shoe(s)	not	have	leather	shoe(s)	expensive

The Chinese student may associate the Chinese sentence with only one of the possible English equivalents. The second sentence above is closer to the Chinese sentence. Therefore, the Chinese student is more likely to use the second construction than the first construction. He must realize that they are equivalent. Practice with pairs like the above will help him learn the construction which is less familiar to him.

5.13.2. In English, when one wishes to say:

This house is bigger than that house.
My brother is older than your brother.

one usually says:

This house is bigger than that one.
My brother is older than yours.

Rather than repeat the identical noun in the second NP, one usually substitutes for it a different nominal. In the above examples, that one replaced that house, and yours replaced your brother. In Chinese, in a similar kind of sentence, the head noun of the second noun phrase which is being compared may be deleted, but the rest of the noun phrase (classifier, demonstrative, number, etc.) remains unchanged:

This house is bigger than that one.

zhèi	ge	fángzi	bǐ	nèi	ge	fángzi	dà
This	(class)	house	compare	that	(class.)	house	big
					(second fangzi is optional)		

My horse is more intelligent than yours.

wǒ	de	mǎ	bǐ	nǐ	de	cōngmíng
I		horse	compare	you		intelligent

In English, the head noun in the second NP is usually replaced with a different nominal. In Chinese, the head noun in the

second NP is simply deleted. The Chinese student may have the tendency to carry this habit he has acquired with Chinese into English:

*This house is bigger than that.
*That horse is more intelligent than your.

The Chinese student simply must learn that the second NP in the English sentence is simplified not through simple deletion, but substitution by another nominal.

5.13.3. There is a similar comparison pattern in English exemplified by the following sentences:

Mr. Li is the same age as Mrs. Li.
Mr. Li is the same height as Mrs. Li.

An alternative way of expressing these sentences is:

Mr. Li and Mrs. Li are the same age.
Mr. Li and Mrs. Li are the same height.

In Chinese, both these sets of sentences are rendered alike:

Mr. Li is the same age as Mrs. Li, or Mr. Li and Mrs. Li are the same age.

Lǐ	Xiānsheng	gēn	Lǐ	Tàitai	yíyàng	dà
Li	Mr.	and	Li	Mrs.	same	old

Mr. Li is the same height as Mrs. Li, or Mr. Li and Mrs. Li are the same height.

Lǐ	Xiānsheng	gēn	Lǐ	Tàitai	yíyàng	gāo
Li	Mr.	and	Li	Mrs.	same	tall

As the Chinese sentences indicate, the pattern in Chinese is more similar to the second English pattern above. The Chinese student may have a greater tendency to use the second pattern than the first one in English. However, he should master the first pattern in order to gain greater freedom with stylistic variations (see also 4.8.).

5.14. Head Noun Deletion.

The noun people is often deleted after an adjective. In English we often say: the poor, the rich, the lame, the wicked, the good, etc. when we mean: the poor people, the rich people, the lame people, the wicked people, the good people, etc. In Chinese, there is a comparable deletion of the head noun. However, the deletion of the head noun when it is understood is generally applicable in Chinese, whereas in English, this is applicable usually only when the head noun is people:

The rich people eat meat, but the poor people don't even have rice.

yǒu	qián	de	rén	chī	ròu,	qióng	de	rén	lián
have	money		people	eat	meat	poor		people	even

mǐ	dōu	méi	yǒu
rice	also	not	have

The rich eat meat, but the poor don't even have rice.

yǒu	qián	de	chī	ròu,	qióng	de	lián	mǐ	dōu	méi	yǒu
have	money		eat	meat	poor		even	rice	also	not	have

But notice:

I did the easy ones but not the difficult ones.

róngyi	de	wǒ	zuò	le,	nán	de	méi	zuò
easy		I	do	(perfect marker)	difficult		not	do

Notice that in the Chinese sentence, the head noun problem is deleted. In the English sentence, however, instead of deleting the head noun, we substitute the pronoun ones for it. The Chinese student should have no trouble with words like the poor, the wicked, meaning the poor people, the rich people, the wicked people, etc. But he may extend this to cases where the head noun is something other than people:

*I did the easy problems and saved the difficult.
*I like the fat, not the thin. (referring to chickens perhaps)

The Chinese student must remember that in English, head noun deletion usually applies only when one is talking about people. He should also learn to substitute the proper pronoun for the head noun when it is understood (see also 5.13.2.)

5.15. The Agentive Suffix -er in English.

In English, animate and inanimate agents of certain acts can be formed by adding the suffix -er to the verb: writer, typewriter, lawn mower, driver. In Chinese, comparable words for agents are usually formed not by adding a suffix, but a front-bound noun, after the verb. However, in Chinese, there are more than one such front-bound noun that correspond to the agent suffix -er in English. Sometimes, words for agents are not forms derived by this process, but are simply separate lexical items:

verb phrase:	to drive a car		agent:	driver
	kāi	chē		sījī
	operate	car		

Notice that in the above example, there is no relationship between

the word for the act and the word for the agent. In most other cases, however, words for agents are derived by the process described above:

typewriter			lawn mower			
dǎ	zì	jī	jiǎn	cǎo		jī
type	word(s)	machine	cut	grass		machine

ticket collector (as on the train)		
chá	piào	yuán
inspect	ticket	agent

Sometimes, human agents can be designated by adding the particle -de to the word for the act, as in:

runner, messenger			vegetable vender			
pǎo	jiǎo	de	mài	cài		de
run	leg		sell	vegetables		

However, the particle de does not form words as generally as the -er suffix in English. That is, one cannot freely make up agent words that one has never heard before by this process. It would be more practical to regard all the agent words as established lexical items in Chinese.

It should not be difficult for the Chinese student to learn the agent suffix -er in English. All he needs to remember is that many different forms that he uses in Chinese correspond to the agentive suffix -er in English.

5.16. Nouns denoting parts of the human body.

In Chinese, nouns denoting parts of the human body have limitations on the kinds of constructions into which they can enter.

In English, we have the synonymous sentences:

The man's hair is black.	That girl's legs are thin.
The man has black hair.	That girl has thin legs.

In Chinese, the second form of each pair above is not used, because the Chinese mind takes for granted that people have hair, legs, etc. In describing a certain part of a person's body, the Chinese would say:

That man has black hair.

nèi	ge	rén	de	tóufa	shì	hēi	de
that	(classifier	man		hair	is	black	

That girl has thin legs.

nèi	ge	nǚ	háizi	de	jiǎo	hěn	xì
that	(classifier	female	child		leg(s)	very	thin

As the glosses indicate, the Chinese sentences are closer to the pattern exemplified by 'That man's hair is black' and 'That girl's legs are thin.' A second form, closer to that exemplified in 'The man has black hair,' is used only when the question centers around whether one has hair, legs, etc.:

That man doesn't have hair.

nèi	ge	rén	méi	yǒu	tóufa
that	(classifier)	man	not	have	hair

That man does have legs, but no arms.

nèi	ge	rén	yǒu	jiǎo,	kěshì	méi	yǒu	shǒu
that	(classifier)	man	have	leg(s)	but	not	have	arm(s)

Because of this difference between Chinese and English, the Chinese student is more likely to say:

The man's hair is black.
That girl's legs are thin.

than:

The man has black hair.
That girl has thin legs.

The Chinese student must learn that the second set of sentences is at least as common as the first in English. In order to speak as much like the native speaker as possible, he should try to master the second pattern in English.

5.17. Number word + NP vs. number word + of + NP.

In English, the construction number word + NP is different from the construction number word + of + NP (in the second construction, the noun is singular if it is a mass noun, plural if it is a count noun.): several boys, several of the boys. In Chinese, the distinction between these two forms is less clear. The second form is often identical with the first, unless one is stressing the point, in which case a distinction is made:

The difference not stressed:

several boys or several of the boys

jǐ	ge	nán	háizi
several	(classifier)	male	child

The difference stressed:

several boys

jǐ	ge	nán	háizi
several	(classif.)	male	child

several of the boys

nèi	xiē	nán	háizi	jǐ	ge
that	(plural class.)	male	child-(ren)	several	(classifier)

In the case where the noun is modified by a possessive pronoun, the distinction is usually made:

my five children					five of my children				
wǒ	de	wǔ	ge	háizi	wǔ	ge	wǒ	de	háizi
I		five	(clas-sif.)	child (ren)	five	(clas-sif.)	I		child (ren)

My five children are in America							
wǒ	de	wǔ	ge	háizi	dōu	zài	Měiguó
I		five	(clas-sif.)	child (ren)	all	in	America

Five of my children are in America.							
wǔ	ge	wǒ	de	háizi	dōu	zài	Měiguó
five	(clas-sif.)	I		child (ren)	all	in	America

Five of my ten children are in America.											
wǒ	de	shí	ge	háizi	(zhīzhōng),	wǔ	ge	zài	Měiguó
I		ten	(clas-sif.)	child (ren)	among	five	(clas-sif.)	ct, in	Amer-ica

Since the distinction between number word + NP and number word + of + NP is not always made in Chinese, and even when the distinction is made the formation of the two phrases in Chinese is quite different from that in English, the Chinese student may need to pay extra attention to this distinction in English in order to learn it.

5.18. Every.

Every is singular gramatically, but plural conceptually. In English, every + NP means something like 'all members of the class NP':

Everyone likes ice cream.
We all like ice cream.

Every child has enough food and clothing.
All the children have enough food and clothing.

Notice that the noun after every is singular and the verb also bears the singular inflection. But in a sentence where all is found in the subject, the verb bears the plural inflection.

In Chinese, the distinction between singular and plural is unclear because there is no singular-plural inflection on nouns and verbs. The Chinese student is likely to have difficulty using number inflection in English spontaneously. This difficulty is compounded in the case involving the adjective every.

Since every is plural conceptually, the Chinese student is liable to use the plural inflection with it. He might say:

*Every man like ice cream.
*Every children have enough food and clothing.

The Chinese student must first of all acquire the habit of distinguishing singular and plural. Secondly, he must remember that a noun modified by every is necessarily singular and this singularity must likewise be reflected in the verb.

5.19. Measure words.

In English as well as Chinese, concrete nouns can occur with measure words. In English, there is usually the preposition of between the measure word and the noun. In Chinese, however, the measure word immediately precedes the noun:

a sack of sugar
yì | bāo | táng
one | sack | sugar

two rows of houses
liǎng | páī | fángzi
two | row | house

one pound of salt
yí | bàng | yán
one | pound | salt

a dozen oranges (rare exception: no of following dozen)
yì | dá | júzi
one | dozen | orange

In English, some abstract nouns such as democracy, exuberance, do not occur with measure words. Others that do occur with such words occur only with a singular measure word, like a fit of anger, a heartful of goodness. This is true also of Chinese:

a heartful of goodness
yí | piàn | hǎo | xīn
one | piece | good | heart

a bellyful of courage
yì | gǔ | yǒngqì
one | bellyful | courage

The major difference between the usage of measure words in English and Chinese is that the word of has no counterpart in the Chinese phrase. For this reason, the Chinese student may delete it after measure words:

*a sack sugar
*one pound salt
*a heartful goodness

The Chinese student simply must remember that the preposition of is necessary between the measure word and the noun in English. Rare exceptions such as the usage of dozen without of must be given extra attention in class.

CHAPTER 6: VOCABULARY

6.0. Introduction.

The previous units of this manual have described the phonological system and the syntactic structures of English as they contrast with those of Chinese. These units have been devoted to differences between English and Chinese phonology and grammatical relationships which cause problems to the Chinese student learning English as a second language. This final unit, which describes the problems that Chinese speakers are likely to encounter in learning English vocabulary, is concerned essentially with the meaning and usage of individual words.

We will outline here several types of problems that Chinese speakers have in learning English words. The types of problems are by no means mutually exclusive; that is, some of the problems are closely related to others. Moreover problems in the usage of words are often related to the differences in the syntactic constructions in English and Chinese. The trouble that Chinese speakers have with a specific word in the English vocabulary is often due to more than one of the problems outlined in this chapter. For example, one type of problem is that two or more words in English may correspond to only one word in Chinese; that is, there may be shades of meaning reflected by different words in English which are not similarly reflected in Chinese. A second type of problem is that some verbs in English can be used only transitively or intransitively, but they do not correspond to transitive and intransitive verbs respectively in Chinese. Chinese speakers tend to confuse the usage of look and see because of both these problems:

He	is	looking	at	the	map.
tā	zài	kàn		dìtú	
he	(progressive marker)	look		map	

I'm	going	to	see	a	movie.
wǒ	qù		kàn	diànyǐng	
I	go		see	movie	

Notice that both look and see in the English sentences are rendered kàn in the Chinese sentences. Moreover, there is nothing in the Chinese sentences that reflect the transitive-intransitive distinction between the English verbs look and see. This example illustrates the fact that not every problem word in the vocabulary can be neatly relegated to only one of the types of problems to be discussed in this chapter.

The foreign student cannot be expected to use words correctly in sentences simply because he has learned the meanings of the words. He may find out the meaning of a word simply by

looking it up in the dictionary, but he would not know how to use the word in a sentence until he has been given some examples of how it is used. The student must experience new words in the context of live sentences in order to make them a part of his active vocabulary. Knowing only the contents of dictionary entries would at best only enable him to understand the words when he hears or reads them.

In this chapter, we will discuss the ways in which the meanings and usages of words in English differ from those in Chinese and how these differences interfere with the Chinese student's acquisition of English vocabulary items.

Table 10

Types of Vocabulary Problems for Chinese Students Learning English

Type of Problem	Examples	Discussion Section
Words in English which have no equivalents in Chinese due to cultural differences	how do you do	6.1.1
'Grammatical' words and words bound up with syntactic constructions which have no equivalents in Chinese.	the, a, whether..., don't...but...., instead, both... and...	6.1.2
Other words in English which have no equivalents in Chinese	less, fewer, to fail, nothing, nowhere	6.1.3
Words in English which correspond to two or more words in Chinese	carry, old, cold next, if, just, too	6.2
Two or more words in English corresponding to only one word in Chinese	many-much, house-home, when-while-during, borrow-lend	6.3
Words in English whose correspondences in Chinese have narrower usages	and, have, be, sand, walk, feel, taste	6.4
Words which have different syntactic restrictions	every-each, let-allow, because-because of, even-even if	6.5.1
Verbs with similar meanings, but restricted with regard to transitivity	hear-listen, see-look	6.5.2

Table 10 (cont.)

Prepositions	in, to, with	6.6.1
Sets of words in English whose meanings overlap with those of sets of words in Chinese	will-can-may, etc.	6.6.2
Derived words	bored-boring	6.6.3
Words with similar sound and similar meanings	other-another, almost-most	6.6.4
Asymmetry in English vocabulary	lower-higher	6.6.5
Idioms	look out! excuse me, pardon me raining cats and dogs	6.7

In the remaining sections of this chapter, the following items have been used to illustrate the types of problems that Chinese students are likely to encounter in learning vocabulary items in English:

Item	Occurrence in this Chapter
a bird in hand is better than two in the bush	6.7
a few	6.6.6
a little	6.6.6
a stitch in time saves nine	6.7
able	6.5, 6.6.2
allow	6.5
almost	6.6.4
and	6.1.2, 6.4
another	6.6.4
around	6.6.1
as	6.6.1
as...as...	6.1.2
ask	6.5
at	6.6.1
aunt	6.2
be (copula)	6.1.2, 6.4
beat	6.5
because	6.5
because of	6.5
become of	6.6.1
believe in	6.6.1
bond	6.6.4
bore	6.6.3
bored	6.6.3
boring	6.6.3
borrow	6.3

Item	Occurrence in this Chapter
both...and...	6.1.2
both (of)	6.1.2
bought	6.6.4
bound	6.6.4
breadth	6.6.5
bring	6.6.4
bring (...) home	6.6.5
brother	6.2
brought	6.6.4
buy	6.6.4
by	6.6.1
can	6.5, 6.6.2
care for	6.6.1
carry	6.2
cheer up	6.6.1
cold	6.2
come	6.6.5
come home	6.6.5
corporation	6.1.1
cousin	6.2
different	6.6.5
disagreeable	6.1.3
dislike	6.1.3
don't...but...	6.1.2
drop in	6.6.1
during	6.3
each	6.5
eager for	6.5
eager to	6.5
either...or...	6.1.2
encourage	6.5
enjoy	6.5
even	6.5
even if	6.5
every	6.5
every cloud has a silver lining	6.7
excuse me	6.7
fail	6.1.3
feel	6.4
few	6.3, 6.6.6
fewer	6.1.3
final	6.3
for	6.6.1
for the sake of	6.6.1
from	6.6.1
get over	6.6.1
give up	6.6.1
go	6.6.5
go home	6.6.5
good evening	6.1.1

Item	Occurrence in this Chapter
hardly	6.1.3
have	6.4
have to	6.4
he	6.5
hear	6.3
height	6.6.5
her	6.5
higher	6.6.5
him	6.5
hope	6.5
how do you do	6.1.1
if	6.1.2, 6.2
impolite	6.1.3
in	6.6.1
in...place	6.6.1
instead	6.1.2
insufficient	6.1.3
interest	6.6.3
interested	6.6.3
interesting	6.6.3
just	6.2
last	6.2, 6.3
laundromat	6.1.1
least	6.1.3
leave	6.6.1
lend	6.3
length	6.6.5
less	6.1.3
let	6.5
like	6.5
listen	6.3
little	6.3, 6.6.6
look	6.0, 6.5
look out	6.7
look over	6.6.1
look up	6.6.1
lovable	6.6.3
lovely	6.6.3
lower	6.6.5
make	6.5
make hay while the sun shines	6.7
many	6.3
may	6.5, 6.6.2
maybe	6.6.2
most	6.6.4
much	6.3
neither...nor	6.1.2
never	6.1.3
news	6.6.6
next	6.2

Item	Occurrence in this Chapter
no-one	6.1.3
nothing	6.1.3
nowhere	6.1.3
of	6.6.1
old	6.2
one	6.4
pardon me	6.7
perhaps	6.5, 6.6.2
possibly	6.6.2
post-doctoral	6.1.1
probably	6.6.2
problem	6.3
put off	6.6.1
put on	6.6.1
put up with	6.6.1
question	6.3
racism	6.1.1
raining cats and dogs	6.7
ready for	6.5
ready to	6.5
same	6.6.5
sand	6.4
scissors	6.6.6
seat	6.6.4
see	6.0, 6.5
series	6.6.6
she	6.5
sister	6.2
sit	6.6.4
slacks	6.6.6
so(...)that...	6.1.2
take (...) home	6.6.5
take off	6.6.1
taste	6.4
the	6.1.2
the other	6.6.4
to	6.6.1
too	6.2
trouble	6.6.3
troubled	6.6.3
troubling	6.6.3
try out	6.6.1
turn out	6.6.1
turn up	6.6.1
unnatural	6.1.3
urge	6.5
use	6.6.1
very possibly	6.6.2
walk	6.4
when	6.2, 6.3
while	6.3
width	6.6.5

Item	Occurrence in this Chapter
will	6.6.2
win	6.5
wish	6.4
with	6.6.1
xerox	6.1.1

6.1. Words in English which have no equivalents in Chinese

6.1.1. There are certain words in English for which there are no ready equivalents in Chinese due to differences in the two cultures. Many phrases of greeting in English lack correspondences in Chinese. Examples are 'How do you do' and 'Good afternoon'. In the same social contexts, Chinese people usually would say either nothing or something very different from these English utterances. Some greetings in English have been translated into Chinese in recent years:

Good evening		How are you?		
wǎn	ān	nǐ	hǎo	a
evening	peace	you	good	(interrogative particle)

Although such greetings do exist in modern Chinese, Chinese speakers may not be as accustomed to using them as English speakers. Correct usage of such greetings is important in social intercourse; therfore, it is important for the Chinese student to become accustomed to using these greetings.

Some terms other than greetings in the English language are peculiar to the culture that we live in: racism, corporation, post-doctoral, laundromat, xerox. There are no equivalents for these words in Chinese, but Chinese students should not have much trouble learning these words in English once they are given an explanation of their meanings.

6.1.2. Some words in the English language are difficult for Chinese speakers to master because of the differences between the syntactic structures of the two languages. For example, the lack of anything in Chinese corresponding to English articles (cf. section 5.1) makes it difficult for the Chinese student to learn to use the to indicate the contrasts shown in sentences like the following:

Boys are fond of baseball.				
nán	háizi	dōu	xǐhuan	bàng-qiú
male	child(ren)	all	like	baseball

The boys are fond of baseball.						
nèi	xiē	nán	háizi	dōu	xǐhuan	bàng-qiú
that	(plural classifier)	male	child(ren)	all	like	baseball

We will go to Canada next week.

wǒmen	xià	lǐbai	dào	Jiānādà	qu
we	next	week	arrive	Canada	go

We went to Canada the next week.

wǒmen	dì	èr	ge	lǐbai	dào	Jiānādà	qu	le
we	(ordinal number marker)	two	(classifier)	week	arrive	Canada	go	(per. mark)

The definite and indefinite articles in English have no equivalents in Chinese, but this does not mean that certain ideas are expressible in English but not in Chinese. Rather, the same ideas are expressed in different ways in the two languages, as exemplified in the above examples.

Another example of this syntactic-cum-vocabulary kind of problem is the usage of the copula to connect a subject and a predicate adjective in English:

She	is	very	pretty.		The weather	is	very	hot.
tā		hěn	piàoliang		tiānqi		hěn	rè
she		very	pretty		weather		very	hot

In the Chinese sentences, there is nothing that corresponds to the word *is* in the English sentences (cf. section 4.5). Chinese uses the copula with predicate nouns but not with predicate adjectives. In contrast to the above sentences, for example, there is correspondence between the English and Chinese copulas in the following sentences:

This is my book.

zhè	shì	wǒ	de	shū
this	(copula)	I	(attri. marker)	book

My professors are all Americans.

wǒ	de	jiàoshou	dōu	shì	Měiguo-rén
I	(attri. marker)	professor(s)	all	(copula)	American(s)

Some words in English seem to be primarily syntactic function words in that they always fit into certain slots in certain syntactic constructions; yet they also have significant semantic content:

Lexical Item	Example
instead	I didn't go out; instead, I stayed home and read.
if (meaning whether)	I don't know if it will rain today.
and (as used to join verb phrases or clauses)	I sat down and ordered a bowl of soup. We gathered the wood and they set up the tents.

Lexical Item	Example
whether...	Whether he comes or not, we'll leave at ten.
don't...but...	He doesn't do anything but sleep all day.
both...and...	Both meat and vegetables are expensive these days.
so(...)that...	It is so slippery that I'm afraid to step on it. He worked late so that he could finish the job.
either...or...	You can get there either by train or by plane.
neither...nor...	He neither drinks nor smokes.
as...as...	As far as I'm concerned, you are through. This is about as fast as I can work.
both (of)	Both of you have passed. Congratulations to you both.

The above are examples of words which have both semantic and syntactic meaning that have no ready equivalents in Chinese. Similar ideas in Chinese are expressed by syntactic constructions different from those in English. Examples:

I didn't go out, instead, I stayed home and read.

wǒ	méi	chūqu,	dāi	zài	jiā	lǐ	kàn	shū
I	not	go out	stay	at	home	inside	read	book

Context alone is relied upon to convey the meaning of instead.

Whether he comes or not, we'll leave at ten.

bù - guǎn	tā	lái	bù	lái,	wǒmen	shí	diǎnzhōng
no matter	he	come	not	come	we	ten	o'clock

jiù	zǒu	le
then	leave	

He neither smokes nor drinks.

tā	bù	chōuyān,	yě	bù	hē	jiǔ
he	not	smoke	also	not	drink	liquor

These examples illustrate the differences in the syntactic constructions employed in English and Chinese to convey the same ideas. The lexical items listed on the top of the page are found with certain constructions in English. These items are lacking in Chinese because the identical constructions are lacking in Chinese. The Chinese student must learn these lexical items in conjunction with certain syntactic constructions which are alien to his native language. No direct translation for

these lexical items can be found; the Chinese student can learn to use them only in the context of English sentences.

6.1.3. A third type of words in English which have no ready equivalents in Chinese can be accounted for simply by differences between the lexicons in the two languages. These words in English cannot be translated by single words in Chinese; they can only be paraphrased by a series of words. Some examples of words of this type in English are:

less
least
fewer
to fail
no one
nowhere
nothing
hardly
unnatural, insufficient, disagreeable, (and many other negative words)

Chinese students have difficulty learning to use such words in English because they cannot use them to replace Chinese equivalents in sentences. Like the lexical items discussed in the previous section, these items must be learned in the context of English sentences. For example, there is no ready translation for to fail in Chinese. Notice the different ways in which to fail in its different nuances is conveyed in Chinese:

He failed the exam.

tā	kǎo	shì	méi	kǎo	guò
he	take (exam)	exam	not	take (exam)	pass

He failed to go today. (He tried to go, but failed.)

jīntian	tā	méi	qù	chéng
today	he	not	go	accomplish

He failed to show up. (We expected him to come, but he didn't)

tā	méi	lái
he	not	come

He wanted (tried) to go to America, but he failed.

tā	xiǎng	qù	Měiguo,	kěshi	méi	chénggōng
he	want	go	America,	but	fail	(perfect marker)

or

tā	xiǎng	qù	Měiguo,	kěshi	shībài	le
he	want	go	America,	but	fail	(perfect marker)

It is only in the last example that we have a one-word translation for to fail in Chinese. However, the contexts in which shībài may be used in Chinese are much more limited than those where to fail can be used in English. Therefore, the Chinese student cannot equate to fail with shībài.

Likewise, the words less, fewer, and least do not have one-word equivalents in Chinese. Less and fewer can sometimes be translated into Chinese equivalents in Chinese. Less and fewer can sometimes be translated into Chinese as shǎo, which basically means 'small amount.' It is only in certain contexts, such as in conjunction with the word bǐ 'compare' or bǐjiào 'comparatively' that the word shao can mean 'less' or 'fewer.'

My horse is less intelligent than yours.

wǒ	de	mǎ	méi	yǒu	nǐ	de	cōngming
I	(attri. marker)	horse	not	have	you	(attri. marker)	intelligent

It rained less last year than this year.

qùnián	xià	yǔ	bǐ	jīnnián	shǎo
last	descend	rain	compare	this year	small amount

There are fewer farmers than merchants in America.

zài	Měiguo	nóng-ren	bǐ	shāng-ren	shǎo
at	America	farmer(s)	compare	merchant(s)	small number

I ate less today.

wǒ	jīntiān	chī	de	bǐjiào	shǎo
I	today	eat		comparatively	small amount

The word least can be translated into one word in Chinese only in certain contexts; in other contexts, it can only be paraphrased.

The least you should have done was to call me.

nǐ	zhìshǎo	yīnggāi	dǎ-diànhua	gěi	wǒ
you	least	ought	make phone call	to	me

My horse is the least intelligent.

wǒ	de	mǎ	zuì	bù	cōngming
I	(attri. marker)	horse	most	not	intelligent

Many negative words in English do not have one word correspondences in Chinese. Some of these negative words are formed by adding a negative prefix (e.g., unnatural, insufficient, dislike, nothing, nowhere, etc.), some are simply negative in concept (e.g., different, never). Some negative words correspond to an end-bound negative particle plus a positive word in Chinese;

others are expressed through the usage of syntactic constructions different from those in English.

Examples of negative words in English translated by a negative particle plus a positive word in Chinese:

I dislike rainy weather.

wǒ	bù	xǐhuan	xià	yǔ	tiān
I	not	like	descend	rain	weather (literally 'sky')

It is impolite to burp after dinner in America.

zài	Měiguo	chī	bǎo	fàn	dǎ-bǎogé	bù	lǐmào
at	America	eat	full	meal	burp	not	polite

Examples of negative words expressed through the usage of syntactic constructions different from those in English:

I have never seen a purple cow.

wǒ	zōnglái	méi	jiàn	guo	zǐ	sè	de	niú
I	'from coming' ever	not	see	(experiential marker)	purple	co-lor		cow

There is no-one here.

zhèr	méi	rén
here	not have	person

Nothing has been decided yet.

shénme	dōu	hái	méi	juédìng
anything	all	still	not	decide

Chinese speakers will probably not have too much difficulty learning those negative words in English which can be translated by a negative particle plus a positive word in Chinese. The only difficulty in this is that there are many negative prefixes in English which correspond to only one negative particle in Chinese. (See 2.13.2) Chinese speakers may mismatch prefixes with words. The solution to this is for the Chinese student to learn such negative words in English as lexical items rather than to create them himself by adding negative prefixes to positive words. The second type of negative words, those which can only be paraphrased into Chinese, need to be learned in the context of English sentences since no direct translations for these words can be found in Chinese.

6.2. Words in English which correspond to two or more words in Chinese

The lexicon of a language reflects how finely various concepts are categorized in that culture. For example, Eskimos have no single word meaning 'snow' but rather have several words

which designate different kinds of snow, while in English there is only the one word 'snow'. This seems to indicate that Eskimos are more aware of the different kinds of snow than English speakers are. This, however, does not mean that English speakers cannot conceive of different kinds of snow; we may place adjectives before the word 'snow' when we want to describe the kind of snow more precisely. What this does mean is that English speakers in general are less concerned with the varieties of snow than Eskimos.

Due to differences in the categorization of concepts, there are many cases where several words in English correspond to only one word in Chinese and vice versa. We may regard these as cases where one word in a language covers a wider range than corresponding words in another language. A second way in which one word in a language corresponds to two or more words in another language is the case where two or more seemingly quite different concepts are expressed by the same word. In such cases, it would seem more practical to regard the word as a homonym than as a single word covering a wide range of meaning. One example is the word 'cold.' This word has two different common meanings:

It is cold in Greenland.
Please come in from the cold.

I caught a cold last week.
You mustn't go out when you have a cold.

As one might suspect, a word such as cold has two correspondences in Chinese, each expressing one of the different meanings of the word in English.

These are the two major ways in which one word in a language may correspond to two or more words in another language. Here we give some examples of single English words which correspond to two or more words in Chinese. Notice that the different meanings of the same English word are expressed in different ways in Chinese.

when:

When I was in Japan, ... (when meaning 'at the time')

wǒ	zài	Rìběn	de	shíhou,...	
I	at	Japan		time	

When he finished, he left. (when meaning 'after')

tā	zuò	wán	le	jiù	zǒu		le
he	do	finish		then	leave		

too:

This coffee is too strong. (too meaning 'overly')

zhè	kāfēi	tài	nóng	le
this	coffee	too	strong	

This building too will have to be torn down.
(too meaning 'also')

zhèi	dòng	fángzi	yě	děi	chāi	xià	lai
this	(classifier)	building	also	should	tear	down	come

You don't want to come, do you? I do too.
(too meaning 'contrary to what you think')

nǐ	méi	xiǎng	lái	ba	wǒ	zhèng	xiǎng	lái	ne
you	not	want	come		I	exactly	want	come	(emphatic particle)

just:

He just arrived. (just meaning 'recent past')

Tā	gāng	dào.
he	just	arrive

This is just what I wanted. (just meaning 'exactly')

zhè	jiù	shi	wǒ	yào	de
this	'it is just'	(copula)	I	want	

He is a just person. (just meaning 'fair')

tā	shì	ge	gōngzhèng	de	rén
he	(copula)		just		person

if:

If you go, I will go too. (if meaning 'hypothetical situation')

yàoshi	nǐ	qù,	wǒ	yě	qù
if	you	go	I	also	go

I still don't know if I'll go. (if meaning 'whether')

wǒ	hái	bù	xiǎode	wǒ	qù	bú	qù
I	still	not	know	I	go	not	go

next:

We will go to Canada next week. (next applied to the future)

xià	lǐbài	wǒmen	dào	Jiānádà	qu
next	week	we	arrive	Canada	go

We went to Canada the next week. (next applied to the past)

dì	èr	ge	lǐbài,	wǒmen	dào	Jiānádà	qù	le
(ordinal number marker)	two		week	we	arrive	Canada	go	

carry:

She is carrying her child on her back.

tā	bēi	zhe	tā	de	háizi
she	carry on back		she		child

He is carrying two baskets of oranges on a pole.

tā	tiāo	zhe	liǎng	luó	júzi
he	carry on a pole		two	basket	orange

She is carrying her child in her arms.

tā	bào	zhe	tā	de	háizi
she	carry in one's arms		she		child

He is carrying some books (in his hands).

tā	ná	zhe	yìxiē	shū
he	carry in one's hands		some	book

old:

This car is old. (old applied to an inanimate thing)

zhèi	bù	chēzi	hěn	jiù
this	(classifier)	car	"very"	old

This is an old man. (old meaning 'advanced in age')

zhè	shì	ge	lǎo	rén
this	(copula)		old	person

My sister is older than I. (older meaning 'elder')

wǒ	jiějie	bǐ	wǒ	dà
I	elder sister	compare	I	old

How old are you?

nǐ	jǐ	suì?
you	how many	years (old)

last (see 6.3 for another problem involving this word):

This is the last day of our vacation. (last meaning 'final')

zhè	shì	wǒmen	jiàqi	zuì-hòu	de	yì	tiān
this	(copula)	we	vacation	last		one	day

I saw him the last time he came. (last meaning 'previous')

tā	shàng-cì	lái	wǒ	jiàn-dao	tā	le
he	last time	come	I	see	him	

One area where single words in English correspond to numerous words in Chinese is in kinship terminology. In addition to the distinctions of gender and generation common to English, Chinese kinship terms reflect age relative to the speaker (if in the same generation), and in many cases, sex of the person through whom the relationship exists and age relative to that person. Examples:

sister: jiějie (elder sister); mèimei (younger sister)

brother: gēge (elder brother); dìdi (younger brother)

cousin: biǎo-jiě (elder female cousin of different surname (i.e., daughter of mother's sibling or father's sister)); biǎo-mèi (younger female cousin of different surname); táng-gē (elder male cousin of same surname (son of father's brother)); táng-dì (younger male cousin of same surname)

aunt: yímā (mother's elder sister); āyí (mother's younger sister); gūgū (father's younger sister); gūmā (father's elder sister)

bómǔ (senior paternal uncle's wife (wife of father's elder brother)); shúmǔ (junior paternal uncle's wife); jiùmǔ (maternal uncle's wife)

There are no terms for our more general concepts 'brother', 'sister', 'cousin', and 'aunt'. If speaking in Chinese, one must be specific. As one might suspect, kinship terms in English are easier for Chinese speakers to learn than vice versa. In general, words in English which correspond to two or more words in Chinese will not result in too much difficulty for the Chinese student.

Because he is accustomed to categorizing certain concepts more finely, he may have the tendency to modify words of this type more precisely than is the habit with English speakers. For example, instead of simply saying 'sister,' he may say 'elder sister' or 'younger sister.' To his English speaking listener, this may seem like overdifferentiation. However, this is not a grave problem; it does not lead to misunderstanding. Longer contact with native English speakers will correct this tendency.

6.3. Two or more words in English corresponding to only one word in Chinese.

Words in the English lexicon which have narrower meanings than their correspondences in Chinese cause more difficulty for the Chinese student. These are cases where two or more English words are rendered into the same word in Chinese. The Chinese student may have trouble learning to make the distinction among these words which have similar but not identical meanings in English. In the following examples, notice that the pairs of words are distinguished in English, but not in Chinese:

many-much:

There	is	too	much	sugar	in	this coffee.
zhè	kāfēi	lǐ	tài	duō	táng	le
this	coffee	inside	too	much	sugar	

There	are	too	many	problems	in	this plan.
zhèi	ge	jìhuà	tài	duō	wèntí	le
this		plan	too	many	problems	

problem-question:

I	have	a	question.	
wǒ	yǒu	ge	wèntí	
I	have		question	

This	is	a	difficult	problem.				
zhè	shì	ge	hěn	nán	de	wèntí		
this	(copula)		very	difficult		problem		

borrow-lend:

Please	lend	me	ten	dollars.	
qǐng	nǐ	jiè	wǒ	shí	kuài-qián
please	you	lend	me	ten	dollar(s)

May	I	borrow	ten	dollars	from	you?	
wǒ	kéyǐ	bù	kéyi	jiè	nǐ	shí	kuài-qián
I	may	not	may	borrow	you	ten	dollars

little-few:

It rains very little in this area.

zhè	dìfang	hěn	shǎo	xià	yǔ
this	area	very	little	descend	rain

Very few children dislike ice cream.

háizi	hěn	shǎo	bù	xǐhuan	bīngqílín	de
child(ren)	very	few	not	like	ice cream	

hear-listen:

I just heard someone knocking at the door.

wǒ	gāng	tīng	jiàn	yǒu	rén	qiāo	mén
I	just	hear	perceive	there is	person	knock	door

He won't listen to me.

tā	bù	tīng	wǒ	de	huà
he	not	listen	I		words

We are listening to a lecture.

wǒmen	zài	tīng	yǎnjiǎng
we	(progressive marker)	listen	lecture

when-while-during:

Don't do any work during your vacation.

nǐ	fàngjià	de	shíhou	bié	zuò	gōng
you	vacation		time	don't	do	work

While he was asleep, a burglar came in.

tā	shuìzháo	de	shíhou	yí	ge	xiǎotōu	jìn	lái	le
he	asleep		time	one		burglar	enter	come	(per. mark.)

When I was seventeen, I joined the navy.

wǒ	shì	shíqī	suì	de	shíhou	cānjiā	hǎijūn	de
I	(copula)	seventeen	years (old)		time	join	navy	

last-final:

(See 6.2. for another meaning of last)

This is the last day of our vacation.

zhè	shì	wǒmen	jiàqí	zuì-hòu	de	yì	tiān
this	(copula)	we	vacation	last		one	day

This is our final decision.

zhè	shì	wǒmen	zuì-hòu	de	juéding
this	(copula)	we	final		decision

The Chinese student is likely to have trouble learning to distinguish pairs or triplets of words such as these examples above because he is accustomed to using the same word for them. He will have difficulty grasping the difference between much and many, problem and question, last and final, etc. He may use much when he should use many and vice versa. The difference in some of these pairs of words can be explained quite easily. For example, the teacher can explain that borrow means to take something away from someone and that lend means to give something of one's own to someone. Other pairs of words have subtler distinctions. For example, the difference between last (in the sense of the word illustrated in the above example) and final is difficult to explain, and yet English speakers do not use them interchangeably. In cases like this, a variety of sentences where the usage of the pairs of words are illustrated should be presented to the student. After seeing many examples, the student will gain a feel for when each word is used to the exclusion of the other.

6.4. Words in English which have only partial equivalents in Chinese

Related to the problem discussed in 6.2. is a class of words in English for which there are only partial equivalents in Chinese. The meanings of these words not covered by their Chinese equivalents are expressed either by syntactic means or by using totally unrelated words in Chinese. A few examples will make this statement clear.

Words in English expressed in Chinese by Chinese equivalents plus a change in the syntactic structure:

sand (as verb):

You must sand this wood before you paint it.

nǐ	yóuqī	zhè	mùtou	yǐqián,	bìxū	xiān	yòng	shā
you	paint	this	wood	before	must	first	use	sand

zhǐ	cā-cā
paper	rub

(Sand cannot be used as a verb in Chinese, a different construction must be used to translate sand as a verb.

walk (transitive):

I walk the dog every morning.

měi	tiān	zǎoshang	wǒ	dài	gǒu	chūqu	zǒu
each	day	morning	I	take	dog	go out	walk

(walk cannot take an animate object in Chinese. The Chinese translation is closer to the structure of 'take dog out for a walk.'

Words in English expressed in Chinese by totally unrelated words:

have:

(Yǒu shares with have the meaning 'to possess')

I have a million dollars.

wǒ	yǒu	yì	bǎi-wàn	kuài-qián
I	have	one	million	dollars

I have seen a white elephant.

wǒ	jiàn	quo	yì	zhī	bái	xiàng
I	see	(experiential marker)	one	(classifier)	white	elephant

(Have is not translated into Chinese in this sentence. The perfect tense is conveyed in Chinese by the experiential marker guo.)

You have to see it to believe it.

nǐ	bìxū	kàn-dao	cái	huì	xiāngxin
you	must	see	only then	will	believe

(Have to can mean must in English. The Chinese equivalent for have does not have this additional meaning.)

wish:

I wish I had a million dollars

wǒ	zhēn	xiǎng	yǒu	yì	bǎi-wàn	kuài-qián
I	really	wish	have	one	million	dollars

(wish applied to the present is equivalent to xiǎng in Chinese.)

I wish I had had a million dollars last year.

yàoshi	wǒ	qùnián	yǒu	yì	bǎi-wàn	kuài-qián	jiù	hǎo	le
if	I	last year	have	one	million	dollars	then	good	

(wish is not translated into Chinese when it is applied to the past. A different construction must be used in Chinese to convey the meaning of this English sentence.)

and:

Mrs. Li and I went to town together.

Lǐ	Tàitai	gēn	wǒ	yìqǐ	dào	chéng	lǐ	qu	le
Li	Mrs.	and	I	together	arrive	city	inside	go	

(and can be translated as gēn when it joins noun phrases.)

I went to town and bought some chickens.

wǒ	dào	chéng	lǐ	qu,	mǎi	le	jǐ	zhī	jī
I	arrive	city	inside	go	buy		several	(classifier)	chicken

(gēn is not used to join verb phrases; and is simply deleted in the Chinese translation.)

The teacher asked me a question, and I couldn't answer it.

lǎoshī	wèn	le	wǒ	yí	ge	wèntí,	wǒ	bú	huì	huídá
teacher	ask		I	one		question	I	not	know how	answer

(and is simply deleted in the Chinese translation.)

to be:

My son is the most intelligent child in his class.

wǒ	de	érzi	shi	tā	bānshang	zuì	cōngming	de	háizi
I		son	(copula)	he	in class	most	intel-ligent		child

She is pretty.

tā	piàoliang
she	pretty

They are studying.

tāmen	zài	niànshū
they	(prog. mark)	study

(to be in the first sentence corresponds to shi. In the second sentence, it is simply deleted in the Chinese translation. In the third sentence, its function is taken over by the progressive marker zài in the Chinese sentence.)

feel:

I feel cold.

wǒ	juéde	lěng
I	feel	cold

This room feels cold.

zhèi	ge	wūzi	hěn	lěng
this		room	'very'	cold

(feel in English can take an animate and an inanimate subject, but not its counterpart in Chinese. The word feel is simply deleted in the Chinese translation of the second sentence.)

taste:

I tasted that fruit.

wǒ	cháng	le	nèi	ge	shuǐguǒ
I	taste		that		fruit

The taste of that fruit is sweet.

nèi	ge	shuǐguǒ	de	wèidao	hěn	tián
that		fruit		taste	'very'	sweet

That fruit tastes sour.

nèi	ge	shuǐguǒ	hěn	suān
that		fruit	'very'	sour

(taste in English corresponds to cháng in Chinese when it is used as a transitive verb. It corresponds to wèidao when it is a noun. It has no correspondence in Chinese when it is used as an intransitive verb.)

one:

I have only one dollar.

wǒ	zhǐ	yǒu	yì	kuài-qian
I	only	have	one	dollar

This one is bigger than that one.

zhèi	ge	bǐ	nèi	ge	dà
this		compare	that		big

One should not smoke in bed.

bù	yīnggai	zài	chuáng	shang	chōuyān
not	ought	at	bed	on	smoke

(one in English corresponds to yì in Chinese when it is used as a number. It has no correspondences in Chinese when it is a pronoun.)

Chinese students may have the tendency to associate this type of English words with only the meanings that they share with their Chinese counterparts. As a result, they may use sand only as a noun, have only in the sense 'to possess', one only as a number, etc. To remedy this, the Chinese student must experience the meanings of these words which are lacking in their Chinese counterparts in the context of English sentences, since no translations for them can be found in Chinese. This way, the Chinese students will learn the usages of these words which are additional to those of their counterparts in Chinese.

6.5. Similar words with different syntactic restrictions.

Another vocabulary problem which confronts the Chinese speaker learning English as a second language concerns those words in English which seem to have similar meanings or functions, but which have different syntactic restrictions imposed on them. For example, the words wish and hope can both be verbs and are similar in meaning, but notice the difference in their usage:

I wish we could go swimming tomorrow.
I hope we can go swimming tomorrow.

The Chinese speaker will see no reason why could must be used in the first sentence and can in the second sentence. In 4.2, we already explained why there is this restriction on the words wish and hope. With some other words, there doesn't seem to be any satisfactory reason for the syntactic restrictions on them.

The restrictions are simply characteristics of particular words in the English language. The following are some examples which are troublesome to the Chinese student:

let and make:

Let her do it.
Make her do it.
Allow her to do it
I asked her to do it.
I urged her to do it.
I encouraged her to do it.

(The clause complements of let and make take the simple form of the verb while other verbs must have the infinitival form in their clause complements.)

enjoy and like:

I enjoy swimming.
*I enjoy to swim.
*I enjoy swim.
I like to swim.
I like swimming.
*I like swim.

(A verbal complement of enjoy must be in the gerund form while that of the verb like can be either in the gerund or infinitive form.)

can and able to:

I can go.
I am able to go.

(Can is a modal, therefore is followed by the simple form of the verb. Am able is a verb plus an adjective and therefore can take only a verbal complement in the infinitive form. See 4.3.2)

may and perhaps:

It may rain tomorrow.
Perhaps it will rain tomorrow

(May and perhaps are similar in meaning, but they belong to different parts of speech and therefore must enter into different syntactic slots.)

eager to and eager for, ready to and ready for:

I'm eager to have her come.
I'm eager for her to come.

(Although eager to and eager for have the same semantic content, they combine differently with other parts of the sentence.)

I'm ready to take the exam.
I'm ready for the exam.

(The difference between ready to and ready for is also a syntactic one, just like the difference between eager to and eager for.)

even if and even:

Even the slowest ones made it.
Even if you had been slow, you could have made it.

(Even is followed by a noun phrase while even if is followed by a clause.)

look and see:

Let's look at the mountain from here.
We can see the mountain from here.

(Look and see are similar in semantic content, but look is an intransitive verb while see is a transitive verb.)

each and every:

Each man for himself.
Every man for himself.
The balloons cost 25 cents each.
*The balloons cost 25 cents every.

(Each and every have the same meaning. But every can function only as an adjective while each can function both as an adjective and as a pronoun.)

win and beat:

I won the game.
I beat Mr. Schmalenberg.
*I beat the game.
*I won Mr. Schmalenberg.

(Win and beat have very similar meanings. But win can take only an inanimate object and beat, meaning 'to win over', can take only an animate object. Both words are translated into the same word in Chinese and are therefore troublesome to Chinese students.)

because and because of:

Because I came late, I had to wait in the back.
Because of my tardiness, I had to wait in the back.
(Because differs from because of in that because is followed by a clause while because of is followed by a noun.)

she and her, he and him, etc.: See 2.7.

The above pairs or groups or words in English cannot be used interchangeably indiscriminately although their meanings or functions may be very similar. The distinctions in these words may be difficult for Chinese speakers to discern, especially those distinctions which they are not accustomed to making

in their native language. It is very easy for the Chinese student to confuse pairs of items like even and even if, eager to and eager for because they share the same sounds and because they are likely to have similar glosses in an English-Chinese dictionary.

In order to learn to use words like these in English, the Chinese student must learn not only the meaning of the words, but also the contexts in which they may be used. Exposure to a variety of sentences in which a word of this type is used will help the student internalize not only the meaning but also the syntactic context of such a word.

6.6. Other confusing English words.

Aside from the above types of words in English which are troublesome to Chinese students, there are some words which are confusing to Chinese students because of the lack of anything in their linguistic experience with which they can associate these words or because of possible misassociations.

6.6.1. Prepositions are a class of words in English which are especially troublesome to Chinese speakers. In the previous chapters, we have already discussed some difficulties that Chinese students have which involve prepositions. The following is a list of problems that we have already discussed; the reader should refer to the previous sections on these points.

1. Time words in Chinese usually do not occur with prepositions, but they do in English (See 4.13.4). The prepositions that occur with types of time words follow only conventions rather than any logic. For example:

   in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening,
   at night, at noon, at dawn.
   at five o'clock, on Monday, in June.
   at a later time, on another day.

   The Chinese student needs to remember that in occurs with a span of time within the day, that at occurs before a specific hour of the day, etc. It is futile to search for logic behind such conventions; the conventions can only be memorized as facts.

2. Adjectival prepositional phrases which refer to places usually follow the modified noun in English, but precede the modified noun in Chinese (See 5.10.2).

3. The combination preposition + relative pronoun can introduce a clause modifier in English. This construction is troublesome for Chinese speakers (See 5.8.4).

4. Two-word verbs may cause difficulties for the Chinese student (see 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 3.9, and 3.22). In addition to the problems with two-word verbs discussed in previous sections, there is the problem of possible confusion between two-word verbs and the combination verb + preposition-adverbs. Here is an example:

   The child looked over the table. (Look over is a verb plus preposition, it means to peer above.)

   The student looked over his notes. (Look over is a two-word verb, it means to review or to examine.)

   The two possible meanings of look over may lead to ambiguity at times:

   John looked over the fence.

   This sentence may mean:

   John peered above the fence.
   John examined the fence.

   Cases such as look over, where there is possible ambiguity, are rare in English. However, the Chinese student does need to distinguish two word verbs from verb + preposition-adverbs.

5. The position of prepositional phrases as time and place adverbs in Chinese is different from that in English (See 3.3).

Aside from the above problems with the usage of prepositions, there are others which we have not discussed in the previous chapters. One characteristic about prepositions in Chinese that differentiates them from prepositions in English is that they share many properties with verbals. In fact, many words that function as prepositions may in other contexts functions as verbs. Examples:

He writes with his left hand.

tā	yòng	zuǒ	shǒu	xiě	zì	(yòng functions as
he	'use'	left	hand	write	words	a preposition.)

Don't use too much money.

bié	yòng	tài	duō	qián	(yòng functions as a verb)
don't	use	too	much	money	

The library is not far from here.

túshūguǎn	lí	zhèr	bù	yuǎn	(lí functions as a
library	from	here	not	far	preposition)

This child has never left home before.

zhè	háizi	cónglái	méi	lí-kāi	guo	jiā	(lí functions
this	child	ever	not	leave	(exp. mark.)	home	as a verb)

What distinguishes prepositions from verbs in Chinese is that they as a rule do not have aspects (See 2.1 and 4.1.4) and they do not function as the centers of predicates. But because they share many properties with verbs, some linguists of Chinese prefer to call them 'co-verbs.' We will continue to call them 'prepositions' in this manual, but with the understanding that they are not to be equated with prepositions in English.

A preposition in English cannot always be translated into a preposition in Chinese:

It rained around four o'clock.

sì	diǎn	zuǒ-yòu	xià	yǔ	le
four	o'clock	'left right' approximately	descend	rain	(perfect marker)

Can you finish by five o'clock.

wǔ	diǎn	yǐqián	nǐ	kéyi	zuò	wán	ma
five	o'clock	before	you	can	do	finish	(interrogative particle)

You will accomplish nothing by yelling.

nǐ	dà	jiào	méi	yòng
you	great	shout	no	use

In sentences like these, the Chinese student must learn to use prepositions where he has not been accustomed to using them before in speaking Chinese.

In English, prepositional phrases may be used to modify nouns:

The products of South America
The people from China
The train to Detroit
The president of this university

Sometimes, these modifying prepositions do not correspond to prepositional phrases in Chinese:

The products of South America

Nán	Měi	de	chǎn-pǐn
South	America	(attributive marker)	product(s)

The president of this university

zhèi	ge	dàxue	de	xiào-zhǎng
this		university		president

Sometimes prepositional phrases cannot modify a noun in Chinese without a verbal expression:

The people from China

cóng	zhōng-guó	lái	de	rén
from	China	come		people

and not: *

cóng	Zhōng-guó	de	rén
from	China		people

The train to Taipei

wàng	Táiběi	qù	de	huǒ-chē
to	Taipei	go		train

and not: *

wàng	Táiběi	de	huǒ-chē
to	Taipei		train

As the above two sets of examples indicate, in making prepositional phrases to modify names, the Chinese student often cannot translate directly from Chinese because a direct ranslation would yield an incorrect or awkward English phrase. The Chinese student must learn to use this type of prepositional phrases in the context of English sentences.

Sometimes, one-word prepositions in Chinese are translated into more complex prepositions in English:

For the sake of domestic happiness, he stopped gambling.

wèile	jiātíng	kuàilè,	tā	bù	dǔqián	le
for sake of	family	happiness	he	not	gamble	

I can't go, please attend in my place.

wǒ	bù	néng	qù,	qǐng	nǐ	tì	wǒ	chūxí	ba
I	not	can	go	please	you	in place of	I	attend	

Occasionally prepositions in Chinese cannot be translated into prepositions in English at all:

He took the opportunity and escaped.

tā	chèn	jīhuì	táo	le
le	take advantage of	opportunity	escape	

Let's drive another fifty miles while it's still daylight.

chèn	tiānliàng	zài	kāi	wǔshí	lǐ	ba
take advantage of	daylight	further	drive	fifty	miles	

In order to form sentences like these in English, the Chinese speaker again has to depart from the Chinese sentence pattern and to use an entirely different pattern in English.

Prepositions in English sometimes have concrete graphic meanings that can be represented graphically. Chinese students usually have little trouble learning these meanings of prepositions. But very often the prepositions used are not those that a Chinese speaker would expect on the basis of graphic representation.

He lives in a wooden house.

tā	zhù	zài	yí	dòng	mù	fángzi	lǐ
he	live	at	one	(classifier)	wood	house	inside

He lives at home.

tā	zhù	zài	jiā	lǐ
he	live	at	home	inside

zài...lǐ in Chinese corresponds to in in English. On the basis of the Chinese sentences and the first English sentence above, the Chinese speaker would expect 'He lives in home' to be correct. But in fact, at is used in place of in in that sentence.

He is sleeping in bed.

tā	shuì	zài	chuáng	shang
he	sleep	at	bed	top

zài...shang in Chinese corresponds to on in English. Graphically, it is more logical that one sleeps on a bed. It would seem illogical to the Chinese speaker that in is used instead, especially since a word comparable to on is used in Chinese.

The best department stores are on Fifth Avenue.

zuì	hǎo	de	bǎi-huò-gōngsī	shì	zài	Dì-wǔ	Jiē
most	good	(attrib. marker)	department store	(copula)	at	Fifth	Ave

It may seem illogical to the Chinese speaker that on is used in this English sentence. In his conception, stores are not 'on top of' streets.

In cases such as these, the Chinese speaker may use the wrong preposition in English. Fortunately, such 'illogical' usages of prepositions occur among the most common expressions in English and the Chinese student will be exposed to them early in his contact with English.

Prepositions in English which are used to convey abstract meanings are more difficult for the Chinese student. It is also

this type of prepositions which corresponds less directly to prepositions in Chinese. Here are some examples:

We haven't seen him for ten years.
We arrived on time.
We arrived in time for the ceremony.
He writes with his left hand
Coffee is sold by the pound, but cloth is sold by the yard.
He got a job as a pilot.

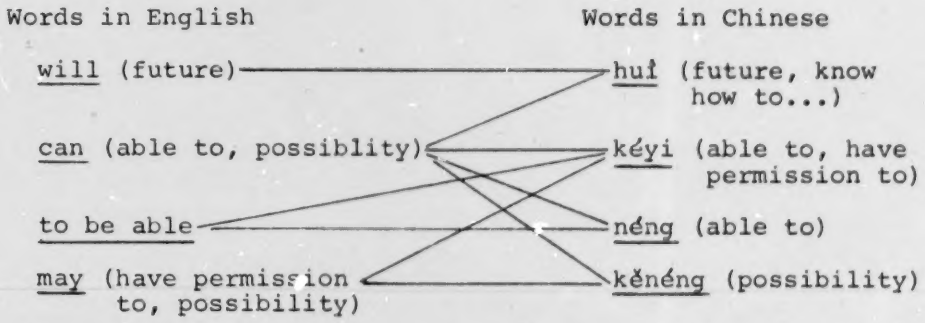
Only usage in English sentences will familiarize the Chinese student with these prepositions.

By far the most difficult prepositions for Chinese students to learn are those that occur in two-word verbs. There is simply no logic to many of them.

Try to cheer her up; she hasn't been too peppy lately.
Please look up her phone number for me.
Should I put on the coffee now?
You're putting me on.
He took off in a great hurry.
I gave up this project when I discovered all the obstacles.
Don't put off to tomorrow what you can do today.
This turned out to be a real fiasco.
Have you tried out the new electric toothbrush yet?
I just can't get over the expression of surprise on her face.
Some parents cannot put up with their children's disobedience.
What became of your grandiose plan?
Our neighbors dropped in last night.
My long lost cousin turned up at a friend's wedding.
I don't care for cream in my coffee, thank you.
Beth and John really believe in living it up.

As we have mentioned before, the best way for the foreign student to learn two-word verbs such as these is to learn the combinations verb + preposition as single lexical items.

6.6.2. Another type of words in English which are confusing to Chinese students are those words which cover some, but not all, the meanings of two or more words in Chinese. For example, the word may covers some of the meanings of the two Chinese words kěyǐ and kěnéng. But kěyǐ and kěnéng cover meanings not covered by the word may in English. Therefore, the Chinese student cannot make a neat association between may and the two Chinese words kěyǐ and kěnéng. The complexity of this type of problems can be illustrated by the following example. A line which connects an English word with a Chinese word indicates that the two words have overlapping meanings.



With words such as these that correspond in a complex way to words in Chinese, the student cannot associate an English word with one or N number of words in Chinese, or vice versa. As the diagram above indicates, the word can may be translated into any one of four words in Chinese, but these four words in Chinese may not always be translated into can in English. The word néng in Chinese may be translated into either can or to be able in English, but can or to be able cannot always be translated into néng in Chinese.

Another illustration of this type of problem words in English is the expression of probability and possibility. In the chart below, the degree of possibility is arranged vertically.

	Words in English	Words in Chinese
100%	probably very possibly	dàgai hěn kěnéng
50%	perhaps, maybe, may	yěxǔ
0%	possibly	kěnéng

Although a degree of possibility is assigned to each word in this chart, the assignment can only be approximate. Each word covers a range in the scale, the intonation of the possibility word in a sentence will place it more precisely on the vertical scale. The degree of possibility expressed by probably and very possibly is more or less the same. However, there is some nuance in meaning that differentiates the two words, so that they are used in slightly different contexts:

It will probably rain today.

Student: Do you think I will flunk this course?
Teacher: Very possibly.
(It is either surprising or unthinkable to the student that he should flunk, but the possibility is high.)

The difference between these two words is a rather subtle one. The Chinese student will learn to differentiate them, however, if he comes into contact with these two words in the context of English sentences. The term very possibly may be confusing to the beginning student because he may associate it with possibly, the meaning of which is quite different from very possibly. He should have little trouble once this is pointed out to him. The greater difficulty lies with the words perhaps, may be, may and possibly. The Chinese student cannot associate these words directly with kěnéng or yěxǔ, and yet he will have the tendency to do so. For this reason, he may use the wrong word to express the degree of possibility which he wishes to convey. In this and similar cases, the Chinese student should dissociate the English words from words in Chinese to which they correspond in such an imperfect way. The Chinese student will learn the more exact meanings of these English words by associating them with their true meanings rather than with semi-equivalent words in Chinese.

6.6.3. Another source of confusion to Chinese students are the derived words in English. We have discussed this problem in great detail in 2.12 and 2.13. Words derived from the same word are similar in sound to each other and to the original word, but they may vary a great deal in meaning. There are much fewer derivations in Chinese. As a result, derived words in English are often translated into Chinese by using entirely different words or different syntactic constructions.

Syntactic Construction in Chinese different from that in English, but same word is used in Chinese to convey the meanings of the derived words in English:

The situation is very troubling.

zhèi	ge	qíngxù	hěn	fán	nǎo
this		situation	very	trouble	mind

This situation troubles me

zhèi	ge	qíngxù	shǐ	wǒ	hěn	fán	nǎo
this		situation	cause	I	'very'	trouble	mind

He has many troubles.

tā	yǒu	hěn	duō	fán	nǎo	de	shì
he	have	'very'	many	trouble	mind		matter(s)

He is a very troubled person.

tā	shi	ge	yǒu	hěn	duō	fán	nǎo	de	shì	de	rén
he	(copula)		have	'very'	many	trouble	mind		matters		person

Entirely different words are used in Chinese to convey the meanings of the original and the derived word in English:

He has an interest in music. or He is interested in music

tā	duì	yīnyuè	gǎn	xìngqu
he	towards	music	feel	interest

Music is interesting.

yīnyuè	hěn	yǒu	yìsi
music	'very'	have	'meaning'

The above examples illustrate the fact that the difference in meaning among words derived from the same word in English are often reflected in Chinese by differences in syntactic constructions or vocabulary items that are much grosser than the differences in the derivational suffixes in English. That is to say, differences in meanings are signalled by larger differences in expression in Chinese than in English. For this reason the Chinese students may have trouble pinning down the exact meaning of derived words. He knows that bore, bored, and boring have something in common in their meanings, but he may have trouble differentiating among them since they are so similar in their surface appearance. Similarly, lovely and lovable are related, but they do mean different things. The Chinese student may have some difficulty pin-pointing the exact difference between them. Practice with series of sentences like the ones below will help the Chinese student become attuned to the exact meaning of the many derivational suffixes in English:

He bored his audience with a long speech.
The audience was bored by his long speech.
His long speech was boring to his audience.
It was boring to listen to his long speech.

The Chinese student may associate the original word with a word in Chinese, but derived words very often do not have equivalents in Chinese. Therefore, the Chinese student must learn to use derived words in English independently of Chinese.

6.6.4. Chinese students have the tendency to confuse pairs of words in English which are similar in appearance and in meaning. When an English speaker speaks in a normal conversational speed, it may indeed be difficult for the ear to discern exactly which member of the pair he uttered. However, the native English speaker will usually know which word was said by the context of the word. The Chinese student, on the other hand, may not be able to pick out the word so readily. Compare the pairs of words below:

The other, another: We went swimming the other day.
We'll go swimming another day.

Please take the other one.
Please take another one.

Almost,most: Most of the students attended.
Almost all the students attended.

They were mostly artisans.
Almost all of them were artisans.

They almost drowned.
Most of them drowned.

Bound,bond: The yard is bounded by a fence.
The two parts are bonded by glue.

Love knows no bounds.
True love is not bonded by material goods.

Sit,seat: We were seated in the front.
We sat in the front.

This auditorium can seat one thousand persons.
One thousand persons can sit in this auditorium.

Because pairs of words like these are so similar in sound and somewhat similar in meaning, the Chinese student may think of them as only one word, or may confuse the two words. Pairs of words which are similar in sound but not at all in meaning can also prove to be confusing. An example is bought and brought. The Chinese student may have trouble remembering which is the past tense of buy and which is the past tense of bring. This type of problem can be solved with practice. The Chinese student should not have too much trouble learning to distinguish pairs of words like those discussed above once his attention is brought to the matter.

6.6.5. Anyone learning a foreign language has the tendency to apply what he has already learned about specific words to other words by analogy. For example, an English speaker learning French may have learned the words:

French word	English gloss
probable	probable
probablement	probably
lent	slow
lentement	slowly
rare	rare
rarement	rarely

On the basis of the above, he may come to the conclusion that the suffix -ment in French is equivalent to the suffix -ly in English. Thus, he may form the word mystérieusement 'mysteriously' although he has never seen or heard it before. In this case,

he would have derived a correct word. But on the same analogy, the student might derive from the French word brillant 'briliant' the word *brillantement which is not a word at all. The French word for brilliantly is brillamment instead. Similarly, a Chinese student learning English may apply what he has learned about specific words to other words by analogy. This, however, may lead him astray in cases where the English language is asymmetrical. That is, what is true for one word may not be true for a similar word. Here are some examples:

Lower, higher: The price of apples is higher this year.
The price of apples is lower this year.

The store lowered the price on apples.
but not: *The store highered the price on apples.
The store raised the price on apples.

Same, different: This table and that one are the same height.

but not: *This table and that one are the different height.
This table and that one are different heights.

Length, width
breadth, height: We have the words long, wide, high, and broad. The nouns which are related to long, wide and broad are length, width, and breadth. The analogous word for high is not *heighth as one might expect, but height.

Come, go: Come home.
Go home.

but not: *Come my house.
*Go my house.

Bring, take
(See 4.15): Bring home some bread.
Take some bread home.

but not: *Buy home some bread.

In the last two examples, come home and go home are best treated as lexical items because they depart from the usual construction involving come and go. The case with bring and take is similar. The Chinese student may make errors such as those above by analogy. Analogy is often very productive, but one must not apply it too enthusiastically for no language can be expected to be totally symmetrical and logical. The cautious student will tend to use words in only those ways that he has heard a native speaker use them, the more adventurous student will tend to be more innovative. In either case, knowing the fact that English

is not totally symmetrical and logical, the student will be on the alert for possible errors when he uses a word in a new way by means of analogy and will be more ready to correct his errors when he does make them.

6.6.6. There are two other types of words which are confusing to Chinese speakers. The first are words whose form seems to be always in the plural. Within this type, there are words whose form is plural, but the words are actually singular:

news: The news was very interesting today.
series: This series of sentences is difficult for the Chinese student.

There are other words that occur only in the plural form, and are actually plural:

slacks: These slacks need to be cleaned.
scissors: These scissors are not sharp enough.

We have already discussed the problem with words like these in 2.3.2. Words like news and series are very few. The Chinese student should not have too much difficulty learning that they are singular although their form is plural.

A second type of confusing words are those whose meanings in certain contexts are different from the meanings that one usually associates with the words. Notice that in the following sentences, a considerable difference in meaning is conveyed by very little difference in the sentences. In Chinese, the same difference in meaning is reflected by a larger difference in the sentence.

Little, a little:

There is little money left.

méi	yǒu	shémme	qián	shèng-xia	le
not	have	'any'	money	remain	(perfect marker)

There is a little money left.

hái	shèng-xia	yìxiē	qián
still	remain	some	money

Few, a few:

This hospital has few women doctors.

zhèi	ge	yīyuàn	hěn	shǎo	nǚ	yīsheng
this		hospital	'very'	few	female	doctor(s)

This hospital has a few women doctors.

zhèi	ge	yīyuàn	yǒu	hǎo	jǐ	ge	nǚ	yīsheng
this		hospital	have	'good-ly'	several		female	doctor

The Chinese student may misunderstand a little and a few, whose meanings are quite different from little and few. The Chinese student must learn that considerable difference in meaning may be signalled by small differences in the sentence. It may also be helful to learn the meanings of items like a little and a few apart from the meanings of words like little and few.

6.7. Idioms.

Idioms in any language are difficult for a foreigner to learn since they often depart from the usual syntactic constructions of the language and are often not grounded in logic. Most idioms are unique to specific languages, but it is surprising how often idioms in one language have equivalents or parallels in another language. Idioms usually have to be learned one by one, since one cannot necessarily understand an idiom merely by understanding the individual words in the idiom; that is, there is usually some meaning in the idiom that goes beyond the words themselves. The following are some examples:

Look out!: does not mean 'look outside,' but 'be careful!'

Excuse me: uttered when one makes a rude sound involuntarily. Such sounds are not considered rude by Chinese speakers. The Chinese student must learn the cultural context for this phrase. This phrase can also be used to mean other things such as 'Please stand aside, I'm coming through.'

Pardon me?: When spoken with the same intonation as 'What's that?' it means 'Sorry I didn't hear you clearly; would you please repeat?'

Raining cats and dogs: rain is coming down in torrents.

A bird in hand is better than two in the bush: better to be certain about one thing than to take chances with several other possibilities.

Every cloud has a silver lining: All bad situations will turn out for the better.

A stitch in time saves nine: to do a thing early in order to avert troubles later.

Make hay while the sun shines: to take advantage of a good opportunity.

Any foreign student, including Chinese, will not be able to use idioms in English such as these until he has become familiar with them. This is not a serious problem because one can very well speak English fluently without using idioms. The instructor

should, however, introduce the more common idioms to the student so that he will be able to understand them when he hears them.

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WORD INDEX

Items in this index are English words used in the text to illustrate particular phonological or grammatical problems. English words which present particular problems in vocabulary usage are listed alphabetically at the beginning of Chapter 6.

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